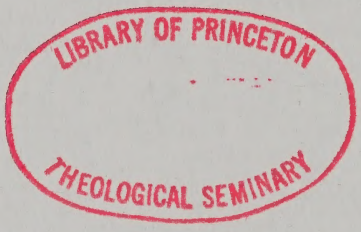

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Dedication

To my students in University Extension courses on the Bible during the past fourteen years, for the stimulation and inspiration which teaching contact with them has given me.

FOREWORD

Western civilization is without doubt the product of numerous factors, but the dominant force that determined what it is today was the intellectual renaissance that followed the fall of Constantinople in 1453 which brought the classical learning of ancient Greece and Rome to the West.

The rediscovery of the Classics restored confidence to the faculties of men who were striving for freedom from dogmatism. It provoked inquiry, encouraged criticism, shattered narrow mental barriers of medieval orthodoxy. It marked the endeavor of man to reconstitute himself as a free being not bound by theological despotism, and to this end it could hold up for emulation masterpieces of works in literature, philosophy and art.

The renaissance as a revolt against the Medieval was prevailingly secular in character. It was tolerant, but indifferent and sceptical. Much good from the past was needlessly sacrificed and plenty of evil was retained. Neither good nor bad was clearly seen as such. It lacked moral norms and controls.

The Reformation that was a concomitant movement was by contrast intensely religious and devout but nevertheless intolerant and inclined to be superstitious. It also lacked moral controls and direction. Neither one was consciously progressive. Both found their ideals in the past, the one in the golden age of the Classics, the other in primitive Christianity. Little was done by either to emancipate reason from authority. The one found its authority in the classic writers, the other put its reliance in the early Church Fathers and the letter of Scripture.

Neither made a conscious step forward, but without intent a great work of emancipation of human powers was accomplished. However, being without moral controls the forces thus released were not only secular but stupendous and above all highly explosive — just how explosive we are only today beginning to realize.

Christianity itself did not arise as a work of moral rejuvenation. It grew out of the status quo of Jewish legalism. The teachings of the great prophets that could have made such a rejuvenation possible were unavailable to that age, having been edited out of use and submerged by Jewish nationalism. The teachings of the Founder that shot up here and there to unprecedented moral heights were not sensed as a part of a larger body of truth, but only as isolated sayings, strikingly paradoxical in character and likewise as visionary and impractical, and therefore not as any basis for salvation.

The result has been that Western Man has never been exposed to a genuine moral rejuvenation. The proposed restoration of the missing span of Old Testament Prophetic religion, supplemented and complemented by corresponding prophetic phenomena in the New Testament, for the first time makes such a moral renaissance of man's present status a challenging quest.

This has come, however, at a time when the prospect of human survival, to say nothing of moral rebirth, has reached its most precarious outlook, if not its lowest ebb, in the history of *homo sapiens*.

It emerges at the point where governments seeking to discover the means to destroy their enemies have now achieved that goal, only to find the means bound up with the frightening corollary that if ever it is fully used it may well also destroy those who use it together with the rest of mankind.

This potential is now a realized fact and in man's hands to be used with whatever suicidal accompaniments are in-

volved. The further possibility has also to be reckoned with, that man may now perish from the earth by the unpremeditated and accidental use of this monster power to destroy.

There is, to be sure, some comfort in the assurance that such world disaster is not yet inevitable. Fools and drunkards sometimes survive where wise men run into trouble. Nevertheless, if man escapes the doom thus fashioned by his own hands and brain, but keeps on playing with the lethal power of the atom to see how much more deadly its destructive powers can be made, there is accumulating scientific evidence to show that very process may result in undermining man's physical being and if not destroy it outright, yet reduce mankind to an impotent species, capable of neither good nor evil.

None of the best alternatives bound up with these threatening horrors offers a human survival worthy of man's present stage of development. Nothing short of a spiritual dynamic that can lift man above his present plane of murderous competition, ruthless and heartless exploitation of subject peoples and racial minorities, senseless and self-destroying overpopulation of the globe, and the haunting and degrading fear that others may do to us, first, what we are preparing to do to them, can be of any avail in this dire extremity.

It is against the background and stark hazards of such terrifying evils whose world trend religion at its best has thus far failed to change, that the following chapters will deal with now available but unused spiritual resources and their bearing on the future of mankind.

Zephyrhills, Florida

Leroy Waterman

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CHAPTER I

PROTESTANTISM AND THE AUTHORITY OF THE BIBLE

Ecumenical Protestantism, that has become the first great Christian body to begin to feel the need of "The unity in Christ of all believers" and to make it an outspoken aim to achieve, has from the beginning centered its religious authority in the Bible. Among early Protestant pioneers, Martin Luther more than perhaps any other one man centers the highest authority of the Bible in Christ. Yet Luther could not point the way to find Christ in the Bible, for those who succeed him have never been able to agree on what they find in the Bible about Christ.

Protestantism as a whole has succeeded no better in this same quest, which brings us to one of the major hindrances that obscures the life of Christ today, and for a very good reason: as long as the Bible is held to be the Word of God of equal authority in all its parts, probably no different results can ever be expected, no matter what new light is cast on the life of Christ. The Bible is, indeed, the source book of the highest religious authority for Christians. That point is beyond question, but its mistaken and misleading use calls for thoughtful, careful examination.

The Bible uniquely provides the highest religious authority for two venerable, closely related but distinct religions, Judaism and Christianity, both of which went through several stages of development during the long period required to produce the present contents of the Bible.

This phenomenon permits us to see the Bible as a book of authority at different levels of religious development, which turns out to be another way of saying that the Bible seems to record as valid most of the reported phenomena in man's religious development from the most primitive beliefs to the highest concepts of religion.

In it are listed unseen spirits, good and bad, many other gods besides that of Israel, gods whose displeasure could supposedly be appeased and their favor gained by a wide variety of gifts.

Anthropology has made it clear how religious ideas have developed in mankind in general. Historical study is prepared to show how the stages of religion recorded in the Bible were gained during more than a thousand years of Israel's experience as a people. Thus the stratification of religious ideas in the Bible can be traced historically in order of their development, although the books of the Bible as now arranged have little or no historical order.

The Religious Authority of the Old Testament

Let us turn then to the Old Testament. Its religious stratification can be conveniently identified and evaluated by the various God-concepts found therein. The authority of that religion at any point for today will manifestly depend on the validity of its various God-concepts in relation to the highest that we now know, for no religion can rise higher than its concept of God, or ultimate reality. By this principle of arrangement we may trace the steps that the people of Israel took in their long upward climb to gain that clearer view of God which has become our richest spiritual heritage.

We begin then with polytheism, the recognition of the existence of many gods. At times it is assumed that Israel's God is naturally one of these (Gen. 1:26; 3:22; 11:7). The sons of God, that is, the race of gods, are said to have seen the daughters of men that they were fair and they took of them such as they chose and from their union is said to have come the giants of old and the heroes of ancient times

(Gen. 6:1-4). This ancient saga furnishes the polytheistic parallel to the Christian Divine Birth conception (Lk 1.35).

The life of the individual is too short and fleeting to establish the God concept. This first comes with social integration and tends to culminate with political organization. The clan family of blood relationship is the smallest social unit capable of perpetuating religious concepts and here family and household gods appear. This stage finds Biblical illustration when Rachel, the daughter of Laban, stole her father's household gods and carried them off (Gen 31:19ff). Similar household gods were found in the house of David (I Sam. 19:13), and also in the home of Micah in the hill country of Ephraim (Jd. 17:1ff), who also had a family shrine containing an image used in the worship of Jehovah as the clan god (Jd. 17:5).

A larger concept of God becomes possible when several clans join to form a tribe and the god of the leading clan becomes the tribal god. The tribe of Dan illustrates how the same result may be achieved more simply. The armed men of Dan stole the images, carried off the priest of the household gods and of the clan god Jehovah from the home of Micah and as a result made Jehovah their tribal god (Jd. 18). They set up Jehovah's image in the sanctuary of Dan where it is said to have remained "as long as the house of God was at Shiloh" (Jd. 18:31). In this period images of Jehovah were believed to be legitimate and efficacious (Jd. 17-18). Moreover, the older Judean Decalogue (Ex. 34:17-26, 9th Cen. B.C.), attributed to Moses, though void of moral admonition, does not forbid the use of images as such, but only prohibits those made of metal. "You shall make for yourself no molten gods" (Ex. 34:17).

Polytheism provides a natural basis for the rise of nationalistic religion in ancient times. When a group of related tribes unite and thereby become strong enough to establish and maintain an independent state, the god of the dominant group can readily become the national God. This stage is

first reached in Israel when David is made king of all Israel and Jehovah then becomes the national God. Before that he was the god of individual tribes or groups of tribes as they gradually settled in Palestine, or earlier the god of nomad tribes in the desert.

In the days of Israel as a nation each of the neighboring states had its own national god, who was regarded as its special protector and the nation as his particular people. International relations could not be carried on in peace time without recognition of the national gods concerned. The principle was early recognized in Israel that national gods were responsible for giving their respective worshippers the lands they possssed (Jd. 11:23-24). And likewise the principle that a given national god, when approached with the proper sacrifices would protect his worshippers from outside enemies, even when the attackers were Israelites (2 Ki. 3:27).

King Solomon's policy of making alliances with foreign Powers, by marrying foreign princesses, most notably by his marriage with a daughter of the Pharaoh of Egypt, became a matter of great national prestige and also opened the way for foreign trade on a large scale. Solomon sealed these alliances by building special shrines for the worship of the gods of his foreign wives and also participated in their worship. The lack of any disapproval of Solomon's policy until centuries later is evident when his Deuteronomic commentator mildly says that only in his old age Solomon's heart was not wholly true to the Lord, when his wives turned away his heart after other gods (I Ki. 11:4).

A nationalistic religion has no easy or natural way to rise above the polytheistic level. This was as true of Israel as of any other people. The nation was always too small and had too little power to conquer enough enemies ever to declare Jehovah to be the supreme God, let alone call him the sole God as was possible for a Nebuchadnezzar in Babylonia. Moreover, on this plane there are no human

rights beyond the national pale. The enemies of the nation are God's enemies (Jd. 5:31). Likewise on this plane a Joshua can be represented as faithful to the Lord when he is credited with conquering the whole land and massacring every living soul in it as the Lord God of Israel directed (Josh. 10:40, BAT.). On this same plane, while God's wrath can be relentless against other nations, his dealings with his own people can be represented as capricious, unpredictable, inciting to evil, and the direct cause of the deaths of 70,000 innocent people (2 Sam. 24).

The first constructive step to lead out of polytheism and toward a stable monotheism is the stage known as henotheism (Gr. *énos* one) defined as the exclusive worship of one god by one people. This stage of thought does not deny the existence of other gods, but only that a god's chosen people should worship no other god but him. The chief biblical argument advanced for this position is that God is a jealous God, jealous particularly of his right to be worshipped and be given gifts and offerings by his normal worshippers.

The statement at the beginning of the late Priestly Decalogue (Ex. 20), "You shall have no other gods before me," is sometimes taken to be in defense of monotheism, but the reason for it, namely, God's jealousy does not support the contention. Elsewhere God's jealousy deals with genuine realities. When the first pair had broken the ban and eaten of the fruit that made them like God and so opened the way for them to eat of the tree of life and live forever, God's jealously guarded prerogative of immortality required, according to the writer, that they be expelled from the garden, that is, from access to the above mentioned tree. God's jealousy of his superior knowledge of good and evil is implied in the ban which was circumvented by the serpent who is represented as knowing that God had deliberately tried to deceive man as God himself admits later, according to the writer (Gen. 3:22). God's jealousy of other gods, ac-

cording to Deuteronomy, arouses him to anger, and if he is unduly provoked by this cause, "he may destroy you from off the face of the earth" (Dt. 6:14-15).

In no sense is the existence of other gods brought in question in this context, and hence the argument can apply only to henotheism. But neither the use of henotheism nor God's jealousy is explained by the pertinent language in Exodus and Deuteronomy attributed to Moses. Both have their explanation in an historical test case in Israel that centered about the prophet Elijah (I Ki. 19:14).

King Solomon's alliances with other nations and their national gods seemed to add to the glorification of Israel. A later pact made by King Ahab of North Israel with the king of Tyre by means of Ahab's marriage with the king's daughter, Jezebel, had no different motivation and introduced no new precedent. The outcome, however, was totally different. The chief underlying difference was that princess Jezebel was not only a royal personage but at the same time the daughter of the high priest of the Baal of Tyre and likewise, a masterful personality possessed of religious zeal who apparently held that if Tyrian Baalism was good for Tyre, it should also be good for Israel.

Jezebel was, therefore, not content merely to have a special shrine for the worship of her own religion. She became an ardent propagandist for Tyrian Baalism. This brought her into direct conflict with the prophetic guilds which had arisen by this time in North Israel. Their opposition led her to seek their eradication. Some of their members were killed, others escaped only by going into hiding. Jezebel's campaign succeeded, for she is said to have had 450 prophets of Baal supported at the royal table of Ahab (I Ki. 18:19).

Israel's prophets were thus temporarily suppressed but rallied under the leadership of Elijah and Elisha and made the issue a life and death struggle between Tyrian Baalism and the worship of Jehovah in Israel. Elijah sought to win out by a direct frontal attack, but was forced to flee the

country for his life at the hands of Jezebel. This led to Elijah's appointment of Elisha and a long drawn-out underground campaign which climaxed in a bloody political revolution resulting in the death of Jezebel and the extermination of the entire royal family of Ahab (840 B.C.). And by a skillful ruse all Israelites who had adopted the foreign cult were included in a blood bath which sought to eradicate every adherent of the hated foreign faith from the land (2 Ki. 10).

The existence of a prophetic group in Israel had been threatened by the advocate of a foreign god within Israel. The prophets had identified their own particular faith as a group that was put in jeopardy with the religion of Israel as a whole (I Ki. 19:10). The struggle was therefore to save Jehovah worship. Israel's religion won and the precedent was established that no other national religion could safely be allowed to be practiced within Israel. This set the standard for henotheism in Israel — only one god to be worshipped by one people.

This was the first historical test case known in Israel concerning the worship of a foreign deity. There was no question involved as to the reality of the foreign god. His existence and power were all too evident in that struggle. Also the precedent established was far more precise than the first commandment. Later this could be generalized and stated in almost colorless form from God's standpoint: "You shall have no other gods before me." Henotheism cannot be thought of here as itself in process of developing in the opposite direction, i.e. into monotheism since there is no evidence of the existence of henotheism or awareness of it in that struggle. Furthermore it was not monotheism, since in that case it would have called for such words as: "I am God and there is no other" (Is. 46:9), words that are entirely incongruous in that context.

In spite of the fact that the national faith still presupposed polytheism, the religion had been preserved from

possible extinction by the early prophetic movement in a struggle whose outcome opened the way to a higher form of religion. The long and bitter fight undoubtedly gave a new sense of the superiority of Jehovah over the foreign gods as well as added loyalty and devotion to him from the prophetic group. Not only did it exclude the worship of other national gods but it tended to frown upon and crowd out subsidiary cults such as (1) the worship of household gods (as seen in words ascribed to Samuel: . . . "The iniquity of the household gods is arrogance (against God)" (I Sam. 15:23 BAT.)); (2) moon worship (hinted at in Isaiah's denunciation of New Moon and Sabbath (Is. 1:13)); and (3) ancestor worship (this age-old door to the doctrine of immortality was so completely closed by the prophets, on the ground that it was a rival cult to Jehovah worship (cf Is. 8:19), that this doctrine disappeared from the recognized religion of Israel for centuries, until it was regained as a result of contacts with Persian religion.) Finally, the focusing of all religious thought concerning the total welfare of the nation on Jehovah alone permitted bringing into play the determining ethical forces of society and finding them based in the character of God, as brought out by the great prophets.

This next higher stratum of religion would, however, not arrive for another century, but actually at the time of Elijah Israel's religion faced a much more serious and insidious threat and resultant degradation, of which Elijah and Elisha and their followers show no awareness: the Canaanite agricultural Fertility Cult.

Israel as at least a semi-nomad people got possession of settled land in Canaan. It was necessary to learn agriculture, of which earlier they were innocent. The most practical way to do this was to learn it from the Canaanites, who already practiced it and who were still to be found in the land. This, however, comprised much more than the technique of cultivating the soil. It involved more especially

the cult practices of dealing with the Divine Owners of the soil, the Baalim (Lords). This included bringing tithes of the crops and livestock to the local Baal sanctuaries at stated seasons of the year and likewise the practice there on feast days of degrading and licentious fertility rites to insure the fertility of the soil.

Since by the time of Elijah the Israelites, especially in North Israel, were predominantly tillers of the soil, the religion of agriculture was basic to their livelihood and their existence, and their god from the desert could not be expected to help them in this matter. However, as the Lord of armies ("Jehovah of hosts"), he had led them to victory over their enemies and so bestowed upon them their land. He was therefore its baal (owner) hence the religious techniques of agriculture came under his jurisdiction, and since by now the people had learned from the Canaanites what these were, they could practice these Baal rites as the body of their religion under the name of Jehovah worship and speak of him as their Baal (cf. Hos. 2:16).

By this unconscious process, which was not new to Palestine, a nomad people having a desert religion moved into the settled land and for all practical purposes abandoned that religion in favor of an agricultural cult of that time. This silent revolution, which took Israel down to the lowest depths of religious degradation, was so sweeping that if a great ethical prophet (Hosea) had not arisen, who realized what was taking place and had warned against it with such fervor that within a century, on the basis of his diagnosis, a great reform (Deuteronomic) was able to displace Baalism for all time, we very probably would have no more interest in the religion of ancient Israel than in any other Canaanite cult of ancient Palestine.

This stratum of religion is the lowest known in Israel's history and was in action for some three centuries. Their earlier religious inheritance was saved from the threat that could have destroyed it by the great ethical prophets of the

8th and 7th centuries B.C., beginning with Hosea.

These devoted men of God, poets as well as prophets, mark a new and higher stratum in Israel's religion. They do not appeal to Moses or the authority of the past; they point out God's character and providence in their own time as based on their deepest convictions. It began with Amos (c. 750 B.C.), who denounced the economic injustice of his day and the religion of lavish sacrificial offerings, which condoned that injustice, for he can show how he came to grasp the wholly ethical character of God and hence God can be pleased with nothing short of economic justice in all human relations (Am. 5:21-24). This new concept of God lifted Amos above the nationalism of the "chosen people" so that he can declare Israel to be no better in God's sight than the remotest people on earth (Am. 9:7), and hence their destruction can come about by misconduct.

Hosea, in the generation following Amos, denounces the current religion of Israel as apostasy from Jehovah and scathingly dwells on the moral pollution of the fertility cult rites. Over against Israel's unfaithfulness and moral degradation, Hosea was able to set forth for the first time the exalted and steadfast ethical love of God, a quality called for in all human relations in the sight of God.

These two prophets set the moral standard and ethical character of the higher prophetic teaching before the exile. Other prophets further illustrated, applied, and emphasized its significance. Their teaching marked a new and deeper insight into the spiritual nature of the universe as it applies to man and to man's own moral responsibility. Their admonitions, however, have remained theoretical and no known group has ever made them the basis of a religious way of life whether Jewish or Christian.

These prophets thought neither of God or man in universal terms; to the very end of the nation they directed their energies to the saving of their nation by supplying a higher form of religion. Their efforts failed and their teaching

remains an unrealized stage of religion, but one whose specifications were made the basis for a yet higher advance in religion. As will be shown, the unnamed author of Isaiah 40-55 [1] as the heir of the earlier prophets, particularly as summed up in Jeremiah, was enabled to grasp the universal and completely ethical character of the one and only God of the universe and of all mankind, and the means by which he can be made known to all men, so that a veritable kingdom of heaven on earth can be seen as a beckoning possibility. In Isaiah II, the ethical religion of the earlier prophets is brought to its full stature.

It is true, Isaiah II's message did not get accepted by a single known individual for centuries, nevertheless, in it is centered the highest religious authority of the Old Testament since it expressed the highest concepts of God and man and of man's future possibilities. Any other divine claims made in the Old Testament at the different levels of the God idea may be shown to have their legitimate place in the experience that produced them and which led to a higher, truer vision of God and reality, but these others are all superseded once the highest concept is reached. For the Old Testament is not so much the record of successive revelations of God to man as it is the story of the divine education of the race in a certain area at a certain time, from the lowest levels of polytheism to the highest concept of the one universal and ethical God. Only when that is clear are we prepared to consider the religious authority of the New Testament.

The Religious Authority of the New Testament

For Christians, from one point of view, the religious authority of the New Testament could hardly be simpler. Jesus is directly or indirectly held responsible for all of its religious teaching, although it is admitted that he wrote nothing himself. The fact, however, that religious thought in the New Testament has an even greater range of stratification than the Old Testament makes the former one of the most

confused and confusing books of religious authority of any historical religion. And its acceptance as a whole as it applies to Jesus can probably never permit a unified conception of him as a person. The reason is a simple one. The range of religious ideas for which Jesus is held responsible extends from primitive animism to the highest form of ethical theism. To assume that he professed to hold all the religious views thus ascribed to him is to make him a confused and self-contradictory person who had no clear conceptions.

These diverse and conflicting data call for an examination, first of all of the animistic beliefs of the New Testament. Animism is the recognition of unseen spirits as a cause of natural phenomena, including bodily illness and mental derangement. The concept arose before the emergence of the God idea. It was early man's primitive philosophy of nature and the world about him. Primitive man personified certain natural forces, which seemed at times to be acting upon him or within him, mostly with evil intent. This superstition was still a common belief in the days of Jesus. And in the account of miracles ascribed to Jesus, he is represented as recognizing the reality of such "unclean spirits" as the cause of disease (Mk. 1:25-26) insanity (Mk. 5:1-13) and epilepsy (Mk. 9:18-27). Jesus is said to command these beings to come out of those so afflicted and thereby to restore them to health.

The claim that Jesus had power over the spirits is often used to justify his use of that power, but in the light of present-day knowledge, we know that it could only have been, at most, the power of a witch doctor. The fact that the contemporaries of Jesus believed in the spirits does not prove that Jesus did, as will be indicated in regard to the miracles in general.

This stratum of New Testament religion is not only far beneath that of the great prophets of the Old Testament but much lower than the debased and perverted Canaanite

cult once incorporated as the content of Israel's religion. The witness of oral tradition through the latest channel of persons who never heard or saw Jesus should not be allowed to stand against Jesus' own reported denial of such acitivities, which denial cannot be explained by oral tradition.

The next stratum of New Testament religion is that of nationalistic religion which we have found to form the main framework of the Old Testament. And for this faith as it appears in the New, Jesus is also made responsible. The Twelve Disciples who were his closest companions came to the conclusion after his death that he was the Jewish Messiah and that he would speedily return to earth to rule over the Jews, sitting on a throne in Jerusalem with the disciples occupying twelve subordinate thrones under him. Jesus is quoted as declaring that this was true (Mt. 19:28).

If this was his outlook, he had no idea of the salvation of the world but was thinking only of himself as a political head of a restored Jewish state, which could only be brought about in that day by supernatural power sufficient to overthrow the Roman Empire.

This aim has been and is held to be the real ambition of Jesus, thus making him a deluded, fanatical, political adventurer of a rather low order, one of several such characters known in that period. This estimate of Jesus overlooks the fact that the disciples could not pin all their hopes of the future on Jesus as the coming Messiah-king and not feel convinced that he must have shared their outlook and somewhere expressed it. With only oral tradition as a guide, the formulation of the thought was inevitable, under the circumstances, whatever Jesus may or may not have said.

The faith of the twelve disciples in his speedy return was mistaken and doomed to an early collapse, following the fall of Jerusalem (70 A.D.). We are fortunate, therefore, to have recorded in the New Testament, even though briefly, this earliest stage of Christianity as a national Jewish faith.

This appears the more remarkable since the third and next stratum of Christianity is the dominant religion of the New Testament which made possible Gentile Christianity, and which is of a totally different character. Jesus is nevertheless made its supreme religious authority. This is the faith of apocalyptic supernaturalism, calling for the end of the world "in this generation." In all the synoptic gospels Jesus is made to say that this is going to take place (Mt. 24:34; Mk. 13:30; Lk. 21:32). Furthermore, this still remains the philosophy of traditional Christianity.

These two previous strata of thought are thus sharply differentiated. If Jesus thought he was to be the Jewish Messiah, it would have been a contradiction of terms if he also proclaimed the coming end of the world during his own lifetime. If he had declared himself to be the Savior of the world, he could not have thought of himself as the Jewish Messiah, who was only concerned with Israel.

The two strata are likewise differentiated by their interpretations of Christ's death. Paul, as an interpreter of apocalyptic Christianity, thinks of Christ as "put to death for our trespasses" (Rom. 4:25) and makes him our paschal lamb that has already been slaughtered (I Cor. 5:7). He makes Christ responsible for this doctrine of blood atonement by quoting what purports to be Jesus' own words: "This is my body which is broken for you and this cup is the new covenant in my blood" (I Cor. 11:23 ff.).

On the other hand, Peter, as spokesman for the twelve disciples, gives no saving value whatever to Jesus' death, but declares that his fellow Jews were responsible for it, yet he softens the blow by saying, "Brethren, I know you did it in ignorance as did also your rulers" (Acts 3:17). This interpretation is corroborated by the simplest and therefore most probably the earliest account of the Last Supper in the gospels, stated as the words of Jesus (Lk. 22:17-19). And here no saving value is given either to the bread or the wine. The Revised Standard Version margin

shows what was added later and now appears in the regular text of the King James Version. It is these later additions that appear in I Cor. 11:23 ff. to supply the blood atonement doctrine of St. Paul. With respect to these two strata and their outlook on the future, whether Jesus held the one or the other, in either case he would have been completely mistaken for nothing happened there as predicted.

However, as already indicated there are no sufficient reasons for thinking that Jesus shared either of these two views ascribed to him, since there are very strong reasons against his doing so. This brings us to the fourth and highest religious stratum of the New Testament. The elements that compose it are plainly stated in the gospels and all are ascribed to Jesus. Their genuineness is not a matter of controversy. They are, to be sure, never found as though a unified whole, but scattered widely as disjointed fragments, none of them fitting any current pattern of ideas of the time, but constituting when brought together an ordered unity on the plane of a universal ethical religion for mankind. Their universality as expressed in Mt. 7:12:13:33; Lk. 10:29 ff.; 15:11 ff., for example, has never been denied.

Thereby was provided a religion that presupposes the message of Isaiah II, for it builds upon and goes beyond that contribution. Herein the religious authority of the New Testament as expressed by Jesus, when he is once freed from later ascriptions, finds its climax and this should be so for all of Christ's followers. How these superlative spiritual heights in the Old and the New Testament were reached will be traced in detail in the following chapters.

CHAPTER II

THE MISSING SPAN OF OUR RELIGION ISAIAH 40-55

i. Its Extent, Time and Place Setting

Ever since the division of the book of Isaiah into two main parts was proposed, there has been no question but what the second part began with chapter 40. The nature and significance of Part II, however, has varied greatly according to the amount of material to be assigned to the writer, sometimes called Second or Deutero-Isaiah, whose work begins with chapter 40.[1]

For a considerable time there was a general consensus of scholarly opinion that the work of a single writer extended through chapters 40-66. In more recent times with increasing scholarly opinion that more than one author was involved in these chapters, a third division has emerged, often called Trito-Isaiah.

But whether this third section was the work of one or of several authors, it is generally agreed that it differs sharply from the more unified second section. And thus far with little doubt the bulk of scholarly opinion has regarded Second Isaiah as ending with chapter 55, the opinion accepted here. Yet there have long been well known scholars who hold that it is cut short at chapter 48.

For the grounds on which this curtailment is made to rest and the radically different setting, motivation and evaluation of chapters 49-55 thereby presupposed, see Excursus.

The possibilities of time and place setting of Isaiah 40-55

that have been proposed are measured in centuries, but today there is practical unanimity as to the terminus *a quo*, namely that it was composed after the fall of the nation in 586 B.C. This becomes virtually compulsory since the prophecy throughout looks forward to a return to a desolate Zion as an imminent prospect of fundamental importance to the author.

The terminus *ad quem* is by no means so limited by necessity. Nevertheless, in view of the writer's urge to return to Zion, it would have been strange indeed, if there had been no indication of a special time, occasion and place from which to go back.

These are now provided by references to Babylon and Cyrus, the Persian, and they yield a pivotal date of 538 B.C. (his conquest of Babylonia). Whatever other settings have been proposed, at least for parts of this prophecy, the above provides the one occasion well known to history when there was good and sufficient reason to think hopefully and constructively of a return of the Jews to Jerusalem. Efforts to expunge these indications, apart from the dubious expedient of altering the text in the interest of a theory,[2] may confidently be said to have failed to provide a situation with an explainable motivation to account for the distinctive ideas of this prophecy.

ii. Disastrous Results of Failing to Grasp and Assimilate this Prophecy

The higher prophetic religion of the Old Testament has come to be recognized, at least by scholars, as a continuous and consistent fabric of higher ethical ideas of God and man, unfolding from the 8th Century B.C. to the fall of the nation in 586 B.C. There, however, the prophetic continuity is commonly assumed to stop because of the failure to weave Isaiah 40-55 into the growing fabric of the prophetic religion and hence to treat that prophecy as something *sui generis*, wholly distinct and apart. Thus to side-track

and leave disconnected a major contribution to the prophetic religion, and thereafter assume that the earlier and later prophetic portions of the Scriptures could be evaluated, understood and appropriated is as fantastic as to imagine that a cross section of a living tree trunk could be cut out and still have the parts that remained as a living tree. This is what Christianity has so far unwittingly presumed to do with the prophetic religion; the confused and conflicting voices of Biblical scholarship concerning these chapters have made this a virtual necessity.

Moreover, the higher prophecy of the Old Testament has traditionally been so thoroughly confused with prognostication, particularly of a messiah, that the real nature of ethical prophecy has been lost sight of. And in the New Testament, emphasis on the fulfillment of prophecy bulks so large that any higher prophetic religion there in its own right, has been almost totally eclipsed. The result is that Christianity has been cut off and effectively isolated from the prophetic religion of both the Old Testament and the New.

Isaiah 40-55 has been called "a spiritual epic that surpassed all the writings of the Old Testament . . . in its influence on mankind, reaching the highest levels of Old Testament religion." [3]

This estimate of the intrinsic worth and significance of these chapters is assuredly none too high. Their direct influence, however, has been negligible, in spite of the author's avowed expectation to the contrary, as thus expressed, "And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together."

Their indirect effects as a masterpiece of exalted poetic, religious literature have been many and varied, but none of them separately nor all of them together can in any way compensate for the failure to grasp and appropriate the direct message of this prophecy. That failure has constituted one of the major religious handicaps and deficiencies

of the Jewish-Christian ideology and has amounted to a hitherto overlooked and unpublicized religious calamity to our civilization. This is but another way of saying that these chapters have never been available for their proper and intended use either in the ancient or the modern world.

There are three reasons for this result. (1) The Jews of the exile period and later were unable to accept the prophet's main thesis. They did do him the honor of preserving his written message. (2) Christians from the beginning and until the 18th century could never see in these chapters anything of direct or vital importance beyond Chapter 53, and this could only be used to support a Christian doctrine of blood atonement, and only then by taking the chapter bodily out of its context and historical setting. (3) Modern Biblical scholarship has never been able to achieve any significant consensus of scholarly opinion as to this prophecy's essential significance or its true import for later times. This outcome has been disastrous in its effect upon the understanding and utilization of the higher religious truths of the Bible. For no matter what the differences in specific conclusions among modern interpreters, these chapters contain three distinctive and basic contributions that have never been matters of serious controversy but that nevertheless dominate the entire prophecy, and are vital to ongoing religion, particularly to the religion of the New Testament and to a true and clear estimate of the religion of Jesus.

These are: (1) the concept of the ethical character of the one and only God of the universe (ethical monotheism). As an ethical universal Being, God can have no favorites but will always be concerned for the highest welfare of all men. (2) The concept of Israel interpreted as God's servant bearing the message of salvation to the rest of humanity. Hence Israel cannot be regarded as the specially chosen people for their own sake,[4] but only as a people chosen for a purpose that reached beyond themselves because of their previous training and experience. Israel thus has a great

future in prospect not for its own sake nor for its own aggrandizement, but because of its previous knowledge of God. (3) The salvation of mankind in a kingdom of God on earth. Hence the future of humanity could not depend on a Messiah of the Jews, since that could only end in Jewish nationalist glorification. However, the salvation of mankind here and now is not only a logical conclusion from the above premises concerning God and man, but it is stated as the divine purpose for the human race (Is. 49:6). These three contributions are essential to a revitalizing of both the religion of the Jews and of Christianity, and the restoration of the distinctive ethical teachings of Jesus to their normative and rightful place of authority.

The pre-exilic prophetic writings are commonly read and admired—but as a product of a far distant past that has no living connections with or direct pertinence for the religion of today. This has been due directly to the unused span of prophetic thought found in Is. 40-55, which it has not been possible hitherto to utilize either in bridging the gap back to the great prophets before the exile or in opening up the way to a universal religion of the future. Nevertheless, the wide range of conflcting opinions of modern scholarship, as applied to Is. 40-55 far from involving the three contributions of that prophecy has on the whole taken them for granted as normal phenomena that call for no particular explanation or discussion. These far-reaching concepts have thus been structurally left out of consideration and hence lost sight of as a part of ongoing religion, primarily because of modern interpreters' inability to agree how the terms and teachings of this prophecy were meant to be understood and applied, because of diverse views of certain personal aspects of the Servant Figure in these chapters.

It is the contention here that this procedure has been basically wrong, that the comprehensive teachings that are clear should first be accounted for, as such, and that when this has been at all adequately done, their interrelated and

internally developed features will cease to be the troublesome problems they have been hitherto.

iii. Development of Distinctive Ideas

Our first task, then, is to see how the three basic ideas found in these chapters were developed and motivated in that setting. We begin with the God idea. Monotheism, but not ethical monotheism has been sporadically claimed for Moses,[5] but it is highly controversial in the form held and lacks a consensus of support.[6]

The great prophets of the 8th and 7th centuries B.C. beginning with Amos, have a certain claim to be called monotheistic because of their ethical God concept, but they do not derive it from Moses. In depicting God's ethical rule, any one of them could be designated as a practical monotheist. We know that it is possible to discern in the 8th Century B.C. some of the main factors that made it possible for an Amos to perceive and grasp the ethical concept of God.[7] However, Amos did not claim to be a monotheist, and neither he nor his successors in the prophetic office till the downfall of the nation ever proclaimed Jehovah alone was God. Their steady and ever closer approach to monotheism may be measured by their increasing denial of the existence of other gods, but thus far the scope of their thought and the problems they faced neither called for nor provide for an over-all statement of the universality of God. What factors can be discerned that could make possible an exclusive and absolute ethical monotheism in the Babylonia of the days of Cyrus?

We know that Nebuchadnezzar by his conquests and especially by his victories over the Egyptians [8] had at least in theory made himself the master of the civilized world of that day. He was, without doubt, at the same time a devotedly religious man, and in conquering the peoples that made up his empire, he had attributed all his conquests to the aid and power of the city god of Babylon, Bel-Marduk. This

God had therefore ostensibly proven that the gods of the conquered peoples were impotent to protect their worshippers. They were accordingly as good as "no gods," [9] even the gods of Egypt could not withstand the power of Marduk.

Nebuchadnezzar was, however, in practice in no sense a monotheist, since his own name was in the form of a prayer to the god Nabu ("Nabu protect the boundary"), whose magnificent temple E-Zida in Borsippa across the Euphrates from Babylon he had restored with a splendor that made it second only to Marduk's great shrine E-Sagila in Babylon.

This devotee could also use almost all of his superlatives in Nabu's honor. He likewise boasted of being the restorer of temples of other gods throughout his realm. This claim has its verification in the wide distribution of burnt bricks bearing Nebuchadnezzar's royal brick stamps, unearthed by excavators in Babylonia where remains of temples have come to light. Yet in his adulation of Marduk in the hymns in his honor, he can speak of him as sole God of the world.[10]

It was this situation which the Jewish exiles in Babylonia, including Isaiah II,[1] had to face. Their national God had shown himself to be as helpless before the hosts of Nebuchadnezzar as any of the discredited gods of the other conquered peoples, and this condition had lasted for more than a generation.

It was still possible for an ethically minded prophet, such as Jeremiah and Ezekiel had been, to say that Israel had been punished for its sins, and hence that their God had not been weak but was a righteous God and even more powerful than he had been thought to be earlier, since he had used other nations as instruments of penalty against Israel. This argument was valid to account for the fall of the nation and we know it was so used by our prophet (Is. 42:23-25), and this directly connects him with those earlier prophets. Nevertheless this very connection with earlier ethical prophecy left the future blank. For a nation that had

been dismembered and destroyed, there was no more precedent for its resuscitation and restoration to life again than there was for an individual person who had met the same fate.

Religion had not thought beyond that catastrophe, of which the prophets had warned and they had strongly so warned as the chief hope of avoiding that dreaded possibility. The whole theory of any nationalistic religion naturally came to an end at this point. Such a religion was posited and promoted on the ground that the particular god would protect his own people from other peoples and their gods. If he failed to do this and as a result the nation perished, this was prima facie evidence that he was a false god. Hence if a nation came to an end, it could no longer be a "chosen people," and a god whose people were in such circumstance was no more to be treated as a god. In general, even if his existence were allowed, manifestly he could not be relied on.

It was not on the basis of such thinking that the great prophets threatened the doom of their nation. It was rather on the ground of the moral conduct of the nation as a whole; not outward loyalty to the national God but conformity to ethical principle would determine God's favor or his condemnation.

But when judgment had been executed, what was the next step in religion? Logically, since only individuals remained, it would have to be a religion of individualism, but that phase of religion had not yet emerged and up to this point the great prophets had dealt with religion only in terms of the nation. After the first captivity in 597 B.C., Jeremiah gave advice to the exiles who had been carried away (Jer. 29:4-9) and Ezekiel tried to set up a summary standard for individuals (Ezek. 18), but these were only tentative outreaches of thought to meet a particular emergency.

The problem that had to be faced was the apparent triumph of other gods and peoples beyond their legitimate

role as instruments of divine punishment for Israel's sins. If this dominance continued, what was there to show that Israel's God actually existed? And what could he do for repentant worshippers who came to recognize that Israel had been punished for its sins, and who wanted to seek again his favor?

Furthermore, if this situation continued for a generation or more what was there that a prophet could lay hold of for encouragement? Indeed, God's seeming failure to do anything for faithful worshippers raised the question of God's justice, and hence of his ethical character, and if that idea crumbled then there was nothing left but to accept the outward evidence that the foreign gods had triumphed because they were the more powerful and hence that Israel's God was only another example of the discredited deities that could not protect their own worshippers. This was the position toward which for fifty years the Jews in Babylonia were being relentlessly pressed by the natural course of events. Under these circumstances no prophetic voice could be raised, and had that condition not changed, their appears to have been no way that the religion of the Jews, as we know it, could have been perpetuated. The complete disappearance of North Israel and its religion over a century earlier under similar circumstances shows how narrow and precarious was the margin that permitted the preservation of the Jewish faith.

A change came with the advent of Cyrus, but it would probably have failed to affect the Jews' outlook, let alone save their religion had there not been a great prophetic soul on hand to grasp and interpret it. The situation was first theological and second political. Neither was of any significance without the other. The outstanding theological fact was that the concept of a supreme God, before whom all other deities were powerless, had been held up to the Jewish exiles in Babylonia for over a generation in the form of Bel-Marduk of Babylon. He had furthermore been

lauded as the sole God of the world,[10] and the dominance of the Babylonian empire in his name was there to prove it. What then did the conquest of Cyrus do for the Jews?

The conquest of Babylonia by Cyrus did not change the status of the Jewish exiles. They were just as subject as before and to a more powerful ruler. His subsequent decree [11] allowing the various uprooted peoples to return to their native habitats within the empire gave the Jews no precedence over the other peoples included under the decree. It gave neither to Jews nor to others any permission to set up an independent sovereignty. There is no evidence that the privilege offered by Cyrus led to a definite migration of any appreciable numbers either of Jews or other peoples to their earlier home lands.

One reason for such negative outcome may well have been that after fifty years, practically all the peoples concerned had been born in Babylonia and thus regarded it as their native land. None of them may well have ever seen the land of their ancestry. Many of them doubtless knew that they now lived in one of the most fertile of all lands of that time and that many of the regions from which they had been deported were semi-barren and little more than pasture lands.

Hence without a great prophet on hand to interpret that situation, nothing further might have come of it for the Jewish religion. Neverthless in terms of theological thought the sequence of events was revolutionary and cataclysmic. Bel-Marduk, the supreme god, addressed as the only god, the god before whom all other deities were helpless, one whose power was certified by the greatest world empire hitherto, had suddenly turned out to be a "no-god" powerless to protect his empire from outsiders. Cyrus, the foreigner, after a few skirmishes was able to take Babylon without a battle, and the world empire of Nebuchadnezzar had suddenly come to an end. The political opportunism of Cyrus which enabled him to exploit the local struggle between the

priesthood of Marduk and the ruling king Nabonidus, and so declare himself the champion of Marduk,[11] did not fundamentally change the situation. The fact was the empire had fallen into foreign hands and Marduk could not prevent it.

To one who could think in theological terms and who knew the recent history of the Jews, it called for a complete reappraisal of that history. First, it was not by the help of Bel-Marduk that Jerusalem had been captured and destroyed. It was due to nothing but the superior fighting force of the Babylonian armies. And yet this result might still have been brought about by Israel's God, who could have used these forces to punish the Jews for their sins, as the earlier prophets had proclaimed. Israel's God could not therefore be dismissed as a discredited god like the other vanquished deities. Jehovah was accordingly from this viewpoint more real than Marduk. But if truly real, he had to be an ethical God or the claim that he had punished the Jews for their sins was false and he had had nothing to do with their fate. Yet if his ethical nature were genuine, then Jehovah had been powerful enough to control and manipulate the world empire of Babylonia for his own ends. If Jehovah's character and reality were assured, his power was ample to more than fill the vacuum left by Marduk, the false god of Babylon who had been exalted as the sole god of the world, and hence it would be possible to declare him to be a universal ethical God.

However, this was far from clear from what had so far happened, for where was there any evidence of Jehovah's moral purposefulness since the fall of Judah? Any evidence to be convincing would have to deal with the future of the Jewish exiles in a way that could point to a larger divine purpose for mankind, commensurate with the universal ethical character of God in relation to man. Until this was manifest so that it could be grasped and presented, there was nothing decisive or fully convincing to any one living in that age that Jehovah was not just another false god, and

therefore a "no-god."

No one even after the fall of Babylon could have foreseen how this could be achieved, for the conquest of Cyrus did not throw light on it, even though it had demoted Marduk for one who was able to see it. Shortly thereafter, a decisive event took place. Yet so far as we know there was only one person who was able to perceive it and proclaim it to the world. And by so doing he became both a great poet and a greater prophet, the author of Is. 40-55.

The event itself was the promulgation of a new domestic policy by Cyrus [11] whereby a group of peoples, uprooted and displaced by earlier conquests, were given permission to return to their former places of residence within the empire and there renew their former manner of life and religious customs. The main object was without doubt to gain loyalty for the ruler through the gratitude of those who would appreciate the privilege thus granted.

In spite of the statements attributed to Cyrus in II Chronicles 36 and Ezra I, there is nothing to indicate that Cyrus was aware that he had shown any special favor to the Jews or that he even knew of them or their God by name. Nevertheless his decree had opened up a new and unparalleled vista of the true future of man. Its only immediate impact was to clear the way for the Jews to restore their corporate community life in their historic homeland.

Two things are to be noted: (1) the royal decree gave no warrant or hint to the Jews or any other people that they could hope to set up an independent kingdom, since that would be rebellion and the decree was made to forestall any such perverse inclination; (2) the author, it is true, paints the prospect of the return home in the most brilliant and inviting colors and repeats the theme in chapter after chapter. He dwells on the restoration of Zion in glowing terms and the use of unstinted superlatives in a steady crescendo of its glorification. He declares over and over again, God's pardon for all of Israel's past sins, repeatedly assures the

exiles of God's steadfast love for them and the glorious future that awaits them. But he never promises them political independence. On the contrary he declares that such a thing is too trivial to be undertaken (49:6). He never speaks of anyone but God as Israel's king, though he thrice repeats that statement. He uses the word Messiah but once, and then applies it to a foreigner (Cyrus), who it is admitted did not know Israel's God.

However, the superlative vista that had opened up, was the new vision of God. The God of a small people in Palestine for 600 years is suddenly perceived as the God of the world, the *only* God. His punishment of Israel for its sins gave the assurance of his ethical character, but if the fall of the kingdom was to mark the end of Israel as a nation, to what end had the people lived? And where was the evidence of God's power or his moral purpose?

At last a way had been opened up for the Jews' restoration as a people, but if not as a nation apart nor as a political kingdom, to what end? It called for a purpose commensurate with the universal ethical God and nothing short of Israel's relation to the rest of humanity could meet the requirements. This raised a question that had never before been asked, namely, what must be the relation of a universal ethical God to humanity as a whole? In the first place, he could be no respecter of persons. Second, he could have no favorites. Third, if he loved some human beings, he must love all others, too. Fourth, if he had a concern for the welfare of any one people, he must be equally mindful of the welfare of all mankind. Fifth, he could not be an ethical God and not do both. Here the new vision of God stands forth in all its universal scope and grandeur. The conditions that made it possible were also clear. But before it could be stabilized as a working theory other questions had to be faced.

A second question that pressed for an answer was: How could such a God reveal himself to humanity? This brings

us to the second primary contribution of this prophecy, namely, the new interpretation of Israel, God's servant. Israel had been told of God's ethical justice and his steadfast love, and that he was no respecter of persons, but Israel as a people had never accepted these claims or taken them seriously. Nevertheless, they had received frequent witness to these truths. If the Jewish exiles could now be made to realize God's universality and be convinced of his ethical character, they would be the most fitted of any group then on earth to make such a God known to the rest of mankind.

In any case, in spite of all that they at present lacked, there was no other race, no other people, who could challenge their candidacy, because of their past experience and discipline. To accomplish this task would make them a key people, the chief benefactors of mankind. No other nation was capable of grasping and performing this task at that time. No other people had been so far fitted and prepared for it. There was no greater task, no greater reward, no greater glory that any people could hope for.

The opportunity for the Jewish exiles to return to their homeland, in view of the above considerations, began to take on world significance in the prophet's eyes. Israel at its maximum was none too large for the task, for it could provide the door leading to a kingdom of God on earth. These thoughts resulted in the prophet's new and revolutionary role proposed for Israel.

The prophet might have designated Israel primarily as God's messenger to mankind, a term he does use at times, but the word "servant" was a much richer designation. It was more personal, more expressive of a continued personal relationship, hence more dignified and enduring. The task of a messenger was usually one for relatively rare and brief occasions. The new role of Israel, to bear the knowledge of the one true God to the rest of the world, was one that no one generation could hope to accomplish. The term

servant was therefore more fitting to express a life-long calling. It was, moreover, a term applied to the great characters of Israel's past. Above all, it was the term that the great prophets had applied to themselves as the servants of God, therefore it was a most honorable term religiously. And even though the servant-slave was at the lowest end of the social scale he was more honorable than the hireling, for the slave's living and security were in general assured by the owner's interest to take reasonable care of valuable property. It is easy to see from this angle why the political restoration of the tribes of Israel could seem to the prophet not only too trivial a task to be undertaken and also misleading, with the salvation of the world looming up, as it were, in the offing. Israel as God's servant for a world purpose thus transcends every other significance. Furthermore, the servant relation of a nation or community to other groups, as called for in these circumstances, could only find expression through individuals. Isaiah II as an Israelite prophet of God who had grasped the character and universality of God and the consequent requirements of Israel in the role of God's servant, as no other prophet had, himself exemplified God's servant. First, he was God's servant in his own right as a true prophet and hence as God's servant to Israel; and, second, as an Israelite who could prescribe Israel's role as a servant of God to mankind, he could find in his own calling to Israel a yardstick of Israel's mission to the larger world (49:1-6). As the earlier prophets often spoke in the name of God, so our prophet can assume to draw the portrait of Israel, the servant, from the divine standpoint (42:1-4).

On the other hand in 50:4-9, the term servant is not used, and the speaker does not claim to be Israel. He does express sentiments that could apply only to an individual who had accepted the role of servant in daily service to others which Israel had never accepted or exemplified. Likewise in the parenthesis 49:5, the speaker is still more sharply distin-

guished from Israel and in these words frames his own great task: "And now the Lord says, who formed me from the womb to be his servant to bring Jacob back to him and that Israel might be gathered to him," that is, in order that the Servant Israel might become a genuine reality.

The role of the servant (Israel) was therefore inclusive, clear cut and essential if God was to accomplish his purpose for the high destiny of man. The prophecy now sets forth the strategy of the writer to achieve this goal. And there is no reason to think that the prophet lost sight of his main aim, or the means of attaining it. As to his method of procedure, his success or failure did not depend on his winning all the Jewish exiles. First it had to be a victory in terms of individual commitments because only in an individual could the ideal be exemplified; the nation itself no longer existed. It did not, therefore, require any specified number of converts to be won. Whether, therefore, the servant concept in these chapters was to be conceived as embodied in a nation or in individuals were not alternatives in the prophet's mind. It had first to be exemplified in Jewish individuals in any case. The task to be performed was world wide and generations long. To succeed it called for a continuing community like a nation. It called for an unlimited reservoir of individuals, if the task was to go forward with any speed, such as only a well organized community could supply. To be effective it also called for a basic center of operations from which the servant spirit could radiate and be identified in the larger world, and to which it could return to renew its strength. However, no nation in its corporate capacity could render the needed service, for it had to be a peaceful service of winning men's minds. He will not cry or lift high his voice. Nevertheless, he will faithfully bring forth justice. He will neither fail nor be discouraged till he has established justice in the earth (42:1-4). Every expression of it had therefore to be through individuals, by individuals, to individu-

als. Thus all the expressions of the servant had to be in individual terms. Even in the figure of Israel as a servant was this implicit. Furthermore even if the whole Jewish people accepted the role of the servant to mankind there would always be outstanding individuals like Isaiah II, who by their deeper understanding, their zeal, their devotion and suffering for the ideal, or their ability to inspire and win others, would serve as norms of what the servant spirit should be and do. In a word, the ideal would inevitably culminate in individual experience. Nevertheless, to accomplish the overall task of the servant, thus conceived, would call for everything that all Israelites could ever supply, and they alone of all men of that time were best fitted for this service. Such was the vision of Israel the servant, in the light of the universal ethical God, as the prophet conceived it.

The third great truth of this prophecy was the coming of the world kingdom of God on earth, a kingdom made up of humanity. This was the outcome of bringing together the concept of the universal ethical God and Israel God's servant, and is expressed in the words: "I will give you as a light to the nations that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth" (49:6).

Granted a Jewish prophet who had first gained a fresh vision of the above three universal concepts in the historical setting here presupposed, how may he have been expected to react to them? Manifestly the great task was to bring God and man together. The means to this end had been located in Israel, God's servant.

God on his part needed no propitiation, no prompting, no persuading. Man did not know God nor how to find him. Israel had known God only imperfectly as a national God, concerned only with the welfare of one small people. Their nation had been uprooted and their independence destroyed. There were left only Jewish individuals, now settled and dwelling in a foreign land, in particular the group within

reach of a great prophet located in Babylonia.

How many of them still thought of Jehovah as their God can now never be known. We only know that for approximately 50 years they had been separated from the land of their forefathers. They had had during that time, no known place of public worship of Jehovah. They had never known Jehovah as a universal god. Their forebears for more than two hundreds years had been told by devout and earnest men that their God was an ethical God and that he was no respecter of persons or nations, but they had never been convinced that these statements were true.

If, then, the main objective was to bring God and man together, the immediate task of the prophet was in his own words: "to bring Jacob back to him" (49:5), that is, to bring the Jews within his reach, back to the God of their fathers, but at the same time to get them to accept him as the universal, ethical God of all mankind, in whose service they as a people were promised the loftiest kind of a destiny.

The obstacles to be overcome were enormous, in fact well nigh insuperable, and as we shall see, the prophet could never actually accomplish his main purpose. Those of Jewish stock within the area to be won had first to be convinced of three things: namely, (1) that their national God, Jehovah was a greater God than they had ever supposed him to be, (2) Jehovah had a great and glorious future for the Jews as Jews, (3) God who had punished their forebears for their sins was also a compassionate God, ready now to grant pardon for all past delinquencies, for if this was not so there was no future for them as a group or for their inherited religion.

That Jehovah was both a real God and a great God could be shown convincingly to the Jewish exiles only by giving them a distinctive and significant role to play in the future. For fifty years there had been no discernible evidence that Jehovah cared. The only way they could feel assured that God had forgiven their past sins as a nation was by pro-

viding a present way out of the foreign land whither they had been carried away. That this was the problem the prophet sought to solve, "to bring Jacob back to him" (God), will be shown by the consistency with which it remains focussed on this objective, in spite of the harassing objections which the exiles continue to raise to the prophet's thesis.

To the extent that this motivation accounts for the form of the prophecy, the prophecy itself will not be a rhapsody wrought directly out of the imagination of the prophet [12] but the outcome of a prolonged and strenuous debate with as sharp argument and counter argument as can be found in any of the preceding prophets, as our prophet first discusses various aspects of his theme with Jewish individuals and small groups, wherever he can reach them.

Whereas the dialogues in the book of Job are in the form of a forensic debate with argument, counter argument and rebuttal in formal order and having all parties to it identified, our prophecy resembles the speech of a speaker-advocate in London's Hyde Park who takes on his hecklers and painstakingly answers all their real objections.

But when he has covered every aspect of the subject and yet has won no definite following, he sits down as did earlier rejected prophets [13] and presents in dramatized poetic form his entire argument, at the same time injecting into it the significant objections to it that had been raised hitherto and their answers. He thus makes an over-all appeal to the dispersed Jews more fully and effectively than was possible, under the circumstances, by word of mouth. Hence in its present form it was meant to be read, as has generally been assumed.

iv. The Prophet's Message

1. *The Highway of God's Return to Zion as the Good Shepherd* (Ch. 40)

The prophet begins his argument by voicing a divine

message of comfort, tender compassion and assurance of a complete pardon for Jerusalem's iniquities. The days of her warfare are declared over (v.v. 1-2). But what was there to show that their sins were thus pardoned or that Jehovah was a God of power or in any sense favorable to them? As if to anticipate this query, a voice is heard calling for the preparation of a splendid processional way like that between the magnificent temples of E-Sagila and E-Zida in Babylon and Borsippa, for the formal passage on state occasions of their gods' images from one temple to the other. In this case, however, the way was to be in the wilderness and to be the way of the Lord, a highway for our God (v.v. 3-4). Divine assurance is given that by this means the glory of the Lord is to be revealed so that all flesh shall see it together (v. 5).

Such a highway in the forbidding desert called for vast resources of power and skill and this sweeping call for action brings the first response from the prophet's audience. It is the pessimistic cry of a disheartened, helpless people. A voice interrupts saying, Cry! and the prophet responds, "What shall I cry?" and the cry follows. "All flesh is grass and all its beauty is like the flower of the field. The grass withers, the flower fades when the breath of the Lord (the hot desert wind) blows upon it. Surely the people is grass" (v.v. 6-7). These words are clearly not the thought of the prophet, since he immediately refuses to accept them as expressing the whole truth and he would therefore never use them of his own initiative. They are thus best regarded as the first of a series of remonstrances and objections offered by the prophet's fellow exiles. They are also always uttered at those points where the audience evidently fails to follow the soaring flight of the prophet's imagination or if it does, probably regards his message as visionary and untrue to the facts of life.

The prophet meets this first faint cry of the birth pangs

of thought on this theme with a sympathetic and powerful rejoinder to the effect that while all that just now said is true, there is a far greater truth that goes with it.

The grass does wither, the flower indeed fades, "but the word of our God stands forever" (v. 8). Acknowledged human frailty is thus powerfully offset by the assurance of God's expressed purpose for the exiles, that cannot be thwarted.

The highway in the desert is temporarily lost sight of because of the interruption by the prophet's hearers. The prophet has accordingly not had time to indicate the reason for the way in the desert or why it was to be the Lord's way or what was to be its goal. We now watch a great artist fill in these details with a few swift strokes. He will not wait to describe building the highway or even to sketch a blueprint of its course. Instead, a swift courier is sent on far ahead. "Get you up to a high mountain, O herald of good tidings" and then at the first mountain top from which, in imagination, Jerusalem can be seen, he is to lift up his voice with strength as a herald of good tidings to Jerusalem and to the cities of Judah, and say: "Behold your God! Yea, truly, the Lord God is here!" Behold he comes with might. "His arm rules for him and his reward is with him" (v.v. 9-10). The highway is thus the way of the Lord's return to Zion, straight back through the desert between Babylon and Jerusalem. This, however, is only one aspect of God's coming. It is also going to be like that of the good shepherd bringing home his flock (Israel) at the end of a long hard day in far distant pastures. He will gather the lambs into his bosom, "and gently lead those that are with young" (v. 11). 40:1-11

The Universal God

Who then is this God? It is he who holds the water of the oceans in the hollow of his hand, marks off the heavens as with a span, the Omnipotent One, who incloses the

substance of the earth as in a measure, who weighs the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance (v. 12). The Omniscient One, who has all knowledge, wisdom and understanding (v.v. 13-14), before whom the nations are only as the drop from a full bucket, and like the fine dust on the scales (v. 15). The greatest forest in the world of that day on the Lebanon Mountains would not suffice for fuel nor all its beasts for a burnt offering to him (v. 16). All the nations are as nothing before him and are accounted as nothing and emptiness (v. 17).

"To whom then will you liken God?" Are you thinking of the splendid idol image of Marduk, overlaid with gold and silver decorations, or be it the humble household god of the poor man, a selected piece of sound wood fashioned by a skilled workman and set up as an image that will stand solidly (v.v. 18-20). "Have you not known, have you not heard?" It is he who sits above the circle of the earth and its inhabitants are as grasshoppers, who stretches out the heavens like a curtain, and as a tent to dwell in (v.v. 21-22); who brings princes (including the rulers of Babylon) to nought, scarcely are they planted, scarcely have they taken root, "when he blows upon them and they wither and the tempest carries them off like stubble" (v.v. 23-24). "To whom then will you compare me?" says the Holy One. Lift up your eyes to the starry heavens, "who created these?" He who brings them out by number and by name, with not one of them missing (v.v. 25-26). 40:12-26

The exiles, however, are far from being won over by this delineation of omnipotence and omniscience, for the mention of these very qualities only makes it seem more clear to them that God had deliberately neglected them and so they make their second interruption saying: "My way is hid from the Lord and my right is disregarded by my God" (v. 27). The prophet childingly repeats their remonstrance, and for the first time identifies them as Jacob-Israel, as he thereby seeks to rehabilitate for them the concept of their

nation.

His reply emphasizes the everlasting power, steadfastness and unsearchable understanding of God. God's seeming disregard is due to a misunderstanding, for not only are his power and knowledge beyond man's grasp, but it is he who is the source of fresh strength to the faint, the weak and the exhausted, but particularly to those who look to him for strength.

Have you not known or heard that the Lord is the everlasting God, the Creator of all that is. He is never weary, "his understanding is unsearchable" (v. 28). It is he who gives power to the faint and to him who has no might (v. 29). Even youths grow faint and weary, and young men fall exhausted (v. 30), but they who wait for the Lord shall mount up as with eagles' wings, "they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint" (v.v. 30-31). 40:27-31.

2. *The World Situation as a Part of God's Plan*

At this point (Ch. 41) the prophet turns to the immediate world situation as it centers in the conquests of Cyrus, to show that it is also a part of God's plan. He calls upon the circle of the nations and their gods as far away as the Mediterranean coastlands to explain the sweeping victories of Cyrus across Asia Minor and now over Babylonia.

"Who stirred up one from the east, whom victory meets at every step", "so that he tramples kings under foot, making them like dust with his sword?" "He pursues them and passes on safely." Who has done this? The answer is, it is the Lord, first and last, who called all the generations from the beginning (v.v. 1-4). The coastlands, themselves, have no answer. They are only terrified by the great conqueror. The best they can think of doing is to encourage each other in making more costly and ornate idols in which to trust for protection (v.v. 5-7).

By contrast, but as a part of the world situation, God, for

the first time is made to address the exiles as "Israel, my servant Jacob, whom I have chosen," "I have chosen you and not cast you off." "Those who strive against you shall be as nothing and perish." "For I, the Lord your God hold your right hand." "Fear not I will help you" (v.v. 8-13). 41:1-13.

This glowing praise of divine help, not only fails to enthuse the exiles but seems to them only to make the more glaring their present abject status. They feel themselves to be no better than a worm to be trodden under foot (v. 14). The designation of Israel (the exiles) as a helpless worm clearly does not originate with the prophet but repeats the exiles' estimate of their own impotence and inability to make any move such as the return from exile and so marks their third remonstrance. The prophet counters with buoyant words of divine assurance. "Fear not, you worm Jacob, I will help you says the Lord." I will make you as a sharp threshing sledge. You shall thresh the mountains of opposition and make the hills of obstruction like chaff, and the wind shall carry them away. And you shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel (v.v. 15-16).

And as for your ability to make the return journey to Palestine, "when the poor and needy seek water and there is none," I the Lord will not forsake them. I will make the wilderness a pool and the parched land springs of water. The desert shall flourish with choice trees, that men may know "that the hand of the Lord has done this." (v.v. 17-20).

By contrast, a challenge is made to the false gods. Let them tell us what is to come (out of the present situation), "that we may know that you are gods; do good or harm that we may be dismayed." Behold, you are naught and can do nothing, he who chooses you goes astray[14] (v.v. 21-24).

On the other hand, it is I, God, who have roused up one from the northeast, and he has come and I have called

him by his name.[15] He shall trample rulers as the potter treads the clay. Who declared this from the beginning? There was none who proclaimed it. "I, first, have declared it to Zion" and in so doing give a herald of good tidings to Jerusalem, while the foreign gods when called upon are silent and show themselves to be a delusion (v.v. 25-29). 41:14-29.

Such was the prophet's introductory sketch of a great turning point in the history of mankind, in the process of bringing God and man together, including a summary portrayal of the determining forces involved to bring this about. These were the universal ethical God, Israel God's servant, and a world conqueror, through whose coming the way to Israel's bright future has been opened up.

From this point onward the author will elaborate in order on the pertinent aspects of this problem in such a way as to make a maximum appeal to his audience in what was in reality, first, a complicated religious life-saving operation, in which those who were sinking into the sea of polytheism did not realize what was happening and were not therefore at all sure they wanted to be rescued.

The concept of Israel as a servant proposed by the prophet was in itself neither new nor inviting to the exiles. They had always looked upon themselves as the servants of their conquerors. That they were to be God's servant to perform a service to the nations, would still leave them in the category of servants. And no service they had rendered to non-Jews had ever brought them honor or distinction. They were thus naturally predisposed to think it never could. This was a tremendous obstacle against which the prophet would have to exert his utmost strength, only to find in the end that it was not enough. But once he had presented and clarified the God idea, the next most pressing requirement, if he was to hold his audience, was to make clear his servant ideal. It is at this point that he sets forth the high mission of the servant (42:1-44:23).

3. *The Mission of Israel, God's Servant*

He describes primarily the universal calling and functions of the servant, Israel, and his assured future. Behold, my servant, my chosen, "I have put my spirit upon him." "He will faithfully bring forth justice." He will not be dismayed till he has established justice in the earth (v.v. 1-4).

This lofty portrait of the servant is represented as painted by the Great Artist, who created the heavens, who spread forth the earth and who gives breath to the people upon it, saying, "I am the Lord." "I have taken you by the hand and kept you." I have given you as "a light to the nations, to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon." "I am the Lord," "my glory I give to no other" (v.v. 5-8).

The first step in this great turning point of history, the conquests of Cyrus, has already taken place, new things I now declare, before they spring forth I tell you of them (v. 9). These are the release and return of the exiles and thereby the glorification of Israel, the servant, in the salvation of mankind.

This tremendous world embracing thought causes the prophet to burst into jubilant song. This is the first of a series of paeans of joyous praise to God, called forth by the prophet's contemplation of the glorious future which God has in store for mankind through God's servant Israel. This outburst of song serves not only to express the prophet's sense of elation, but by its expression he seeks to have his listeners see and share the vision in which they are to be so vitally involved. This is equally true of similar poetic outbursts that follow.

"Sing to the Lord a new song, his praise from the end of the earth!" Let all nature join in, the sea and all it contains, the coastlands of the Great Sea and all their inhabitants, the desert and all its wanderers, the dwellers on the tops of the mountains. Let them all give glory to the Lord and declare his praise in far-off lands, for his victory over

all his foes including the Babylonians (v.v. 10-13). It is evident from the complete shift in thought from the preceding lofty elation to the humble apologetic defense which follows that the vivid presentation of God's speedy world triumph has failed to enthuse the prophet's listeners. And without doubt God's speedy triumph seemed to them most improbable and their grounds for that opinion were vividly at hand. For if true, why then had God been silent in their behalf for over a generation. This would constitute their fourth objection.

Other aspects of this thought of God's long neglect of the exiles have appeared earlier as they do later in the prophecy. Whether for this reason the prophet did not repeat this objection here, the verses that follow (v.v.14-16) seek to answer this particular argument, and the reason for these verses at this point and their appropriateness are accounted for by the above query, which we know the exiles harbored.

In his defense, the prophet, while admitting that the time had been long, describes this inaction as a restraining of himself on God's part and not due to idleness. It was a period of gestation of a greater future, the birth pangs of which are now at hand (v. 14). God's new activities will find expression in nature that will further the exiles' return.

"I will lay waste mountains and hills," "I will lead the blind in a way that they know not." "I will turn darkness into light before them, the rough places into level ground," "and I will not forsake them" [16] (v. 16). 42:1—16

The prophet's explanation, however, fails to satisfy the exiles' previous query and they are inclined to turn upon him a deaf ear. Their failure to see how the explanation given accounted for the long period of divine silence and neglect of them or to appreciate the prospect which the prophet sees so vividly before them brings a stern chiding in the form of a divine rebuke.

"Hear you deaf and look you blind." Who is blind but my servant or deaf as my hoped for messenger? Who is blind

as the servant of the Lord? "He sees many things but does not observe them. His ears are open but he does not hear." The resultant penalty for this in the past has made them a prey with none to rescue. They declare themselves robbed and spoiled, which the prophet repeats. Who among you will give ear to this and listen for the time to come? Who was it gave up Jacob to the spoilers in the past? "Was it not the Lord against whom we had sinned," in whose moral laws they would not walk? That is why Israel suffered the might of battle, so that it set him on fire round about, yet he failed to understand or take it to heart (v.v. 18-25). 42:18-25

Chapter 43 will seek to dwell on the new situation. But now, O Jacob-Israel, a change has come says the Lord, who created you. "Fear not, for I have redeemed you." "You are mine." When you pass through the waters they shall not overwhelm you. When you walk through the fire, the flames shall not consume you. I am the Lord your Savior.[17]

The prophet's explanation of Israel's downfall as due to their disobedience (42:24-25), followed by the assurance that God their creator has now redeemed them as his own and is henceforth their Savior, a sure shield from future calamities (43:1-3a), has not been convincing. There lingers a feeling that other gods may have had something to do with their fate, and hence they question the power of Jehovah to assure their future. This is evidence to the prophet that his hearers are still blind and deaf to the truth.

How shall he convince them? One method would be to get them to make better use of the knowledge they already have. He begins somewhat severely, Bring forth these blind and deaf people who yet have good eyes and ears. (v. 8). Suppose we were to call together an assembly of other nations, who among them could show us the former things such as the downfall of Israel as the penalty for sin as foretold by the prophets? Let the representatives of the nations give their account of these things (v. 9). They are like the heathen gods (41:21-24), they can do nothing of the sort.

But "you are my witnesses says the Lord and my servants whom I have chosen." Only your God through his prophets declared these things beforehand in the past. You know about this, and hence you are God's witnesses that these things are so. And if you know that God alone foreknew the future and then brought it to pass, is it not for you to "know and believe me and understand" that "before me no God was formed, nor shall there be any after me," "and besides me there is no savior" (v.v. 10-11).

"I declared and saved and proclaimed when there was no strange god among you." Who could tell you otherwise? You know about all this and hence "you are my witnesses, says the Lord" (v. 12). "I am God" and "there is none who can deliver from my hand" (v. 13). What reason then can there be why you cannot trust him for the future? 43:1-13

Having met the doubts of his audience by the argument from God's omniscience (foreknowledge) of which they are witnesses from Israel's past, the prophet now reverts to the new situation with which chapter 43 began. He points out the first manifest steps leading toward the realization of their great future. "Thus says the Lord," "for your sakes I am sending to Babylon and I will break down all the bars, and the shouting of the Chaldeans shall be turned to lamentations" (v. 14). It is recalled how at the Exodus, God made a path in the sea and brought forth chariot, horse, army and warrior and yet they lay down, they could not rise. They were "quenched like a wick" (v. 15-17). The exiles are exhorted to forget these former events, because God is about to do new and greater things. Now it springs forth, "do you not perceive it (v.v. 18-19a)?" "I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert" "to give drink to my chosen people," "that they might declare my praise" through their great mission (v.v. 19b-21).

It is true, O Jacob, you called on other gods, being weary of me, O Israel, and thus you did not bring me your sacrifices and offerings, you did not assume to satisfy me with sweet cane bought with money or the fat of your offerings,

though I never wanted your offerings. But you have burdened and wearied me with your iniquities (v.v. 22-24). Nevertheless, I am he who blots out your sins for my own sake and I will not remember them (v. 25). This sweeping and complete forgiveness of sins causes the exiles to raise another (implied) query their fifth, about their punishment in the past, if God's forgiveness is so easy and generous, why should his punishment of Israel be so severe and so long? The prophet's answer is: Do you still wish to argue about the earlier punishment of your forefathers? The divine answer is: "Your first father sinned and those who came later transgressed against me." It was for that reason that I profaned the princes of the sanctuary, I delivered Jacob to utter destruction and reviling (v.v. 26-28).

43:14-28

All this was in the past, but now a new day has dawned. God declares, Jacob is my servant, my chosen, your maker from the womb will help you. Fear not, for as I pour out water on the thirsty land, I will pour out my Spirit and my blessing on your offspring. They shall spring up like willows by flowing streams. Outsiders will join you and call themselves by the name of Jacob-Israel. Thus says the King of Israel and his Redeemer, the Lord of hosts: I am the first and last, besides me there is no God. Who like me has announced what is yet to be? "Fear not nor be afraid. Have I not told you from of old?" "And you are my witnesses!" For there is no God beside me, I know of none [18] (v.v.1-8). "Remember these things, O Jacob-Israel, for you are my servant," I have swept away your transgressions like a mist [19] (v.v. 21a-22a).

The portrait of the ideal servant and his world mission (42: 1-8) led the prophet to break forth into jubilant song (42:10-13). Now in spite of the present sad state of the servant (represented by the exiles), his lack of the power of observation and perception and his failure to understand the punishment of the nation for its past sins (v.v. 18-25),

God is now sending to Babylon to bring the exiles home (43:14-15) in a wonderful manner that will far surpass the ancient deliverance from Egypt (43: 16-21).

Above all, the exiles are assured that God without any sacrifices or offerings (43:22-24) has swept away all their sins (v. 25). This tremendous fact of God's unfailing mercy and forgiveness in spite of Israel's past delinquencies and present failure to appreciate God's mercy and the prospects of their own future world mission, causes the prophet to call for a second paean of praise to God, which marks the end of the portrayal of the servant of Jehovah and his assured and glorious future. This time the appeal is to both heaven and earth, "Sing, O heavens for the Lord has done it, shout O depths of earth, break forth into singing O mountains, O forest and every tree in it! For the Lord has redeemed Jacob and will be glorified in Israel" (v. 23).

In 42:1-44:23 the prophet has thus dealt with the servant, Israel, his past, present and future, his relation to God and man, his high calling and mission to mankind, also God's tender and unceasing care for Israel his servant, his pardon for his delinquencies and the steps he is about to take to set the servant on the way to his high destiny. 44:1-23

4. *Cyrus the Persian and Israel's Mission*

The historical means to this end will now be discussed in detail (44:24-48:32). Twice before in indirect but unmistakable language (41:2-3, 25), the prophet has referred to the conquests of the Persian. He will now (44:24-45:25) come to Cyrus by name (v. 28) and interpret his conquests and his significance in the providence of God, for the salvation of mankind. The prophet's self-imposed task is to fit the overthrow of Babylon into world perspective, theologically and historically. He begins therefore with God, the Creator and Israel his servant. "Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer," the Creator of all things, who stretched out the heavens alone and spread out the earth; He who frustrates the makers of (false) omens, and makes fools of the di-

viners, who by marking the position of the stars, promised triumph for the Babylonians (v.v. 24-25) ; He who also confirms the word of his servants and performs the counsel of his messengers; who says of Jerusalem, she shall be inhabited, and of the cities of Judah, they shall be built; who said to the deep (the Red Sea) of old, "Be dry," and of rivers like the Jordan in the days of Joshua, I will dry them up (v.v. 26-27).

These are symbolical of the hindrances in the way of Israel's return home and future progress. And finally, the God who says of Cyrus, "He is my friend (shepherd) and he shall fulfill all my purpose" [20] (v. 28a). 44:24-28

Cyrus' commission and place in the divine plan follows (Ch. 45). "Thus says the Lord God to his Messiah (anointed) Cyrus, whose right hand I have grasped, to subdue nations before him," to open doors before him that may not be closed. "I will go before you and level the mountains, I will break in pieces the doors of bronze." I will give you the treasures in secret places, that you may know that it is I, the God of Israel, who call you by your name. I do this for the sake of my servant Jacob, my chosen. "I surname you, though you do not know me." "Besides me there is no God. I gird you, though you do not know me." I do all this that men may know from the east to the west that there is none beside me. "I form light and create darkness." "I am the Lord who does all these things" (v.v. 1-7).

This wonderful world triumph of God's purposes through the unconscious instrumentality of Cyrus causes the prophet for a third time to break forth into rapture. "Let the skies rain down righteousness" and let the earth open also and cause righteousness to spring up. In either case it is the Lord who is the ultimate cause (v. 8).

At this point an argument is presented in defense of Cyrus that can only have point, after the preceding poetic flight of triumph because of Cyrus, if the exiles have just challenged the prophet's interpretation of Cyrus and ques-

tioned whether he can be considered as an instrument of God's larger purpose. The prophet had already admitted that Cyrus was unconscious of such a role. It would constitute their sixth objection.

Their doubts thus expressed were of course, from the prophet's standpoint, a questioning of God's providence, and in meeting this issue, he falls back on the omnipotence of God, and his right to create whatever instruments suit his purpose, especially in this case, since it is clearly a righteous purpose. Man is in no position to challenge such purpose. Shall a potter strive with him who created the clay? Will you command me about the work of my hands? "I made the earth and created man upon it." I stretched out the heavens "and commanded all their host." The justification for Cyrus is that "I have aroused him in righteousness"; he shall build my city by setting my exiles free [21] (v.v. 9-13). The prophet goes on to develop that situation. 45:1-13

Prisoners [22] of Cyrus from Egypt, Ethiopia, and the Sabeans, as they pass by in chains, shall do obeisance to you saying: "God is with you only," and there is no god besides him. "Truly thou art a God who hidest thyself, O God of Israel." All his opposers are put to shame and confounded. The makers of idols perish in confusion, "but Israel is saved by the Lord with endless salvation" (v.v. 14-17).

The orderliness and purposefulness of God's work is further emphasized. God who created the heavens and formed the earth, did not make it a confused waste, but a place of orderly habitation. "I did not say to the offspring of Jacob, Seek me in chaos." I, the Lord, speak and declare what is right (v.v. 18-19). Let the survivors of the nations conquered by Cyrus assemble, let them take counsel together. "Who told this long ago?" (God's righteous warnings through the great prophets).

"Was it not I, the Lord?" I am "a righteous God and a Savior, there is none besides me." God's purpose is the sal-

vation of mankind (v.v. 20-21).

"Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth. For I am God and there is no other." Through me has gone forth in righteousness a word that shall not return. "To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear." Only in the Lord are righteousness and strength. "To him shall come and be ashamed all who were incensed against him." Likewise all the offspring of Israel shall triumph and glory in him (v.v. 20-25). 45:14-25

The conquests of Cyrus have their climax in the fall of Babylon, but, far more important than the fall of the city was the collapse of its gods (Ch. 46). The greatest theological revelation thus far was the demonstration that the supposed great gods of Babylon and Borsippa, Bel-Marduk and Nabu, far from being the guarantors of the sovereignty of the Babylonian empire, were utterly powerless to save the city and were thus reduced to dumb idols ornate with gold and silver but without any life whatever. Instead of furnishing the power to win victories and carry off captives, they themselves go into captivity before the invader, Cyrus (v.v. 1-2). Their claim to universal power having proved empty, the way is cleared for the universalizing of Israel's God. By contrast, it is Jehovah who has carried Israel and even to old age. "I have made and I will bear; I will carry and I will save" (v.v. 3-4).

The prophet then challenges his hearers in the name of God. To whom will you liken me and compare me? Is it with these so-called but discredited gods wrought of gold and silver and skilled craftsmanship of human hands? Such an object has to be set in place so it cannot move. If one cries to it, it cannot answer or save him from trouble (v.v. 5-7).

The prophet charges his hearers as transgressors for regarding such objects hitherto as gods. "Remember the former things of old; for I am God and there is no other." I declare the end from the beginning, "saying, My counsel

shall stand and I will accomplish all my purpose" (as stated through the pre-exilic prophets), "calling a bird of prey from the east (Cyrus), the man of my counsel from a far country" (v.v. 8-11).

The designation of Cyrus as "a bird of prey" is obviously not the estimate of the prophet as the following phrase "man of my counsel" shows. It is rather the exiles' opinion of him interjected here as an expression of their hopelessness of being delivered by such a source. It thus constitutes their seventh objection. The prophet replies by taking up the charge. Cyrus a bird of prey? Yes, no doubt, from his own standpoint, nevertheless, from God's standpoint he is the man of his counsel to carry out the larger purposes of God for Israel and mankind. "Hearken to me you stubborn of heart," who refuse to see the signs of your deliverance in current events. Nevertheless, God is bringing it near "and my salvation will not tarry," for "I will put salvation in Zion" and my glory shall be for Israel (v.v. 8-13). 46:1-13

Having thus disposed of the foreign gods and having displaced them by the universal God, Jehovah, the prophet raises a taunt song of triumph over the fallen city of Babylon (Ch. 47). O Virgin daughter, Babylon, you shall no longer be called tender and delicate. "Take the millstones and grind meal." Strip off your veil and your robe, your nakedness shall be uncovered. "I will take vengeance." Our redeemer is the Holy One of Israel. "Sit in silence and go into darkness." "No longer shall you be called the mistress of kingdoms" (v.v. 1-5).

It is true I was angry with my people and "I gave them into your hand, you showed them no mercy." You said, "I shall be mistress forever, so that you did not lay these things to heart." Now, therefore, you lover of pleasures who said in your heart, I shall not sit childless as a widow. Nevertheless, these two things shall come to you in one day, in spite of the great power of your enchantments (v.v. 6-9). "You felt secure in your wickedness," "your wisdom and

your knowledge led you astray." "Evil shall come upon you for which you cannot atone," disaster "which you will not be able to expiate" (v.v. 10-11). Stand fast with your many sorceries "with which you have labored from your youth." "Those who divide the heavens," "who at the new moons predict what shall befall you, Behold, they are like stubble." "They cannot deliver themselves from the power of the flame." Such to you are those with whom you have trafficked from your youth. "There is no one to save you" (v.v. 12-15). 47:1-15.

Chapter 48 provides the climax to the section concerning Cyrus. Israel's future is depicted through the interpretation of Cyrus' larger significance in the over-all providence of God. This was no easy thesis of which to convince the Jewish exiles (45:9-11). It was without doubt difficult for them to see how this swift conqueror was anything more than a "bird of prey" from the east, which phrase the prophet echoes (46:11). The prophet's own designation of him as the Lord's anointed, when at the same time it was clearly admitted that he was not only a foreigner but one who did not even know of Israel's God (45:4-5), was contrary to all Israelitish thought hitherto. They were, therefore, understandably sceptical; the only way the prophet could hope to convince them was to point out how their own future was directly involved. This, he had already done indirectly by his description of the overthrow of the greatest heathen gods of Babylonia (Ch. 46), and by his song of triumph over fallen Babylon (Ch. 47). These events cleared the ground for the demonstrable power and reality of the universal, ethical God of Israel and hence gave added authority to his direct declaration about Cyrus (48:14-15), and what this meant for Israel (v. 20). Nevertheless, the prophet realizes what slight response, if any, beyond doubt, incredulity and open criticism he has gained thus far from his hearers. He analyzes this outcome and finds it due to something very old in his people, and he makes this the

basis for sharp rebuke. Their stubbornness and slowness to accept the true message from God, they inherited from their forefathers (48:17-19).

"O house of Jacob," descendants of Judah, "who swear by the name of the Lord" "but not in truth or worthily" (v.v. 1-2). "The former things I declared of old" (e.g. the threats of doom by the great prophets). "They went forth from my mouth," then suddenly I made them a reality. Knowing well that you were and are obstinate, I declared them to you before they came to pass, lest you should say my idol and my graven image ordained them (v.v. 3-5). Having heard all this, can you deny it? "From this time forth I make you to hear new things." "They are created now, not long ago." "From of old your ear has not been opened." For I knew indeed how treacherous was your nature "and that from birth you were called a rebel" (v.v. 6-8).

Nevertheless, "for my name's sake, I defer my anger," "that I may not cut you off." "I have indeed refined you, but not like silver," it has been in the furnace of affliction. For my own integrity I did it, for how should I allow my name to be profaned (v.v. 9-11). In the past my word that came was one of warning to save the nation from ruin. Today, it is the promise of a glorious future for all men. Hearken to me, O Israel, "whom I called." I am the first and the last. My hand created the earth "and my right hand spread out the heavens." Will you not then listen to the present message (v.v. 12-13)?

Who among the so-called gods has declared these things? "The Lord has brought him (Cyrus)." [23] He shall perform his purpose on Babylon and the Chaldeans. I, even I, have called him "and he will prosper in his way. Draw near to me hear this," "I have not spoken in secret, from the time it came to be, I have been there (v.v. 14-16)." [24] "Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel" I am he who teaches you to profit in the way you should go. "O, that

you had hearkened to my commandments, then would your peace have been like a river". "Your offspring would have been like the sand" and "their name would never be cut off" (v.v. 17-19).

But let all that pass, today a glorious future is opening before you. You are free to go forth from Babylon. "Flee from Chaldea. Declare this with a shout of joy." "Send it forth to the end of the earth, and say, the Lord has redeemed his servant Jacob." As in days of old, "they thirsted not when he led them through the deserts. He made water flow for them from the rock." So shall it be in the days to come when the outlook seems dark and forbidding [25] (v.v. 20-21). 48:1-21

The prophet has now amplified and articulated his three main thought contributions: (1) the eternal ethical God over all mankind, (2) Israel, God's servant in relation to the rest of humanity, (3) the vista of the kingdom of God on earth which Cyrus and his conquests, in the providence of God have opened up.

5. *Zion's Glorious Restoration and the Suffering Servant* (Ch. 49-54)

In the section that follows (Ch. 49-54), the prophet will have nothing further to say concerning the scope of these three propositions. He will, on the other hand, concentrate on the exiles and the motives that should stir them to action, specifically Zion's restoration, the glory that is to come to a restored Israel as a result, and how this is to be achieved.

Earlier, he had set forth the world task of God's servant (42:1-7). In 49:1-6 he will depict Israel in its future prophetic character as God's servant to mankind, but do it in terms of the prophet's own personal experiences, thus: "The Lord called me from the womb," "He made my mouth like a sharp sword" (v.v. 1-2a). These lines in no sense apply to Israel as servant. Israel had not only labored in vain but the nation had ceased to be. The exiles who sur-

vived were completely lacking in precisely the two assurances as stated that "my right is with the Lord and my recompense with my God" (v. 4b). Up to this point, they had accepted no part of the prophet's definition of them as God's servant. These words cannot refer to the birth of the patriarch Jacob-Israel (Gen. 25:26) or to his subsequent experience. They are the words not of a patriarch or a nation, but of a true prophet. They parallel the call of Jeremiah. "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations" (Jer. 1:5). A mouth that is made a sharp sword is an expression of individual prophetic experience, that is completely lacking in reality when applied to a nation like Israel. Israel had never accepted any such role and never did later. Israel's weapons had hitherto all been carnal. "In the shadow of his hand he hid me" expresses how the prophet had been preserved to do his appointed task. This was definitely something that had not happened to the nation Israel which no longer existed. The same thought is repeated in the synthetic parallelism: "He made me a polished arrow, in his quiver he hid me away (preserved me). And he said to me, you are my servant" (v. 3a). These were standard words for describing any true prophet. But when it is said, "you (Isaiah) are my servant, Israel,[26] in whom I will be glorified" (v. 3b), he was making his own experience as a prophet to Israel a yardstick for measuring Israel's prophetic role to the larger world. It was as though God had said to him, "your service to Israel symbolizes the Israel in whose service to the nations I will be glorified," and he thereby presented to the exiles the unique concept of a prophet nation.

If our prophet had been identified by name as other great prophets, and as he must have been to his contemporaries, when in this passage he identified poetically his experiences as a symbol of Israel's future role, there could have been no legitimate ground for confusion or misunderstanding.

When that identification did not get recorded in his day, yet when he described his calling in terms that could apply only to an individual, his later readers and interpreters should not have been misled by this symbolism.

What was it he had done? He did not thus identify himself as equal to the nation, or assume to represent it before the world. But he had set himself the task of trying to bring his fellow Jews to accept the concept of a universal ethical God, Jehovah, and the resultant bearing of their acceptance on their own calling and significance, which had now already an open door leading to it. His presentation of the message to them made it clear that if they accepted it, they would be forced by the same urge that motivated him to carry forward the same message to the larger world of mankind. He saw therefore clearly that in a true sense his special task was to be a yardstick of God's will for Israel and so he could voice it, as in our passage. Those scholars who would delete the word Israel here, are rightly impressed with the personal character of the servant, yet miss the real force and point of the passage; while those who retain it but see in it only Israel the nation throughout miss its meaning no less by overlooking the qualities that cannot thus apply to that Israel. But when the prophet had applied his yardstick, his reaction was much like that of Jeremiah before him, when he faced the prophet's call. "Ah, Lord God! behold, I do not know how to speak, for I am only a youth" (Jer. 1:6).

So our prophet, when he realizes the tremendous significance of the symbol he has adopted, reacts like Jeremiah but not only at what lies before him, but also at what lay behind, realizing how little if anything he had accomplished to win over his hearers to his message. For his prophecy thus far had won no open acceptance; it had elicited, on the contrary, only objections, hopelessness and despair. And hence he says, "But I said, I have labored in vain. I have spent my strength for nothing and vanity." Yet that does not mean that he despairs or has lost faith in God. For he

adds, "Yet surely my right is with the Lord, and my recompense with my God" (v. 4).

By thus dwelling upon his own particular role of prophet to Israel, in a verse that has long been recognized as a parenthesis,[27] he is led to go over explicitly just what his real task as prophet was. This he now does in what follows. "And now the Lord says, who formed me from the womb to be his servant, to bring Jacob back to him and that Israel might be gathered to him" (v. 5a). This then was the task. If he could accomplish it, here was the road to salvation for all men, but if he failed, there was no salvation at all in sight. The task itself was an almost superhuman, impossible one, as the sequel shows. For it was not merely that the Jews were fast slipping away from faith in the God they had known, but they had never known the God the prophet here presented: namely, the eternal, ethical, all powerful and everlasting God. The extent to which they did come to do so, the sequel in Judaism shows, and the motivation for this task permeates and includes the whole prophecy (40-55).

Realizing, then, the supreme importance of the task, the prophet rightly and truly adds, "For I am honored in the eyes of the Lord, and my God has become my strength" (v. 5b). And how absolutely true it was that his strength was in that last clause can hardly be doubted. Thereupon, he adds, "and now the Lord God has sent me and his spirit." [24]

Accordingly at this point, he is enabled to take up the great figure of the prophet nation and give it its true proportions. He says "It is too light a thing, that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and restore the preserved of Israel" in their national form; on the contrary, "I will give you as a light to the nations, that my salvation may reach to the ends of the earth" (v. 6). 49:1-6. This is the great and glorious goal, and the "restored" Israel is an indispensable part in it. In a sense this thought expresses the climax of the prophecy. It might be summarized

as expressing the goal of history and revealing the true nature of the cosmos.

After this breath-taking flight to the very summit, the prophet returns to the people where they are and depicts more realistically, yet still in poetic terms, the things that lie ahead, specifically the complete transformation from their present servile and despised estate and the wonderful bringing back and restoration of the Israelites not only from Babylonia but from the four points of the compass, followed by a lyrical outburst as a conclusion.

"Thus says the Lord," in a time of favor I have answered and helped you, "and given you as a covenant to the peoples, to restore the land, to apportion the desolate heritages," saying to those in prison and darkness, come forth (v.v. 8-9a).

On their homecoming "they shall feed along the ways," on all bare heights they shall find pasture. "They shall not hunger or thirst" or suffer from burning heat, "for he who has pity on them" will lead them by springs of water (v.v. 9b-10). "I will make all mountains a way" and prepared highways shall be ready. Not merely from Babylonia shall they come, these from afar, from the north and west and from as far south as Aswan in Egypt (v.v. 11-12). 49:7-12. That will be wonderful. The prospect of Israel's marvelous restoration and exaltation, after all the nation had suffered in its downfall, and the vision of a far-flung return under the kindly and protecting hand of God from the four points of the compass, lifts the prophet for the fourth time on exultant wings of song and leads him this time to call on the universe to join in "Glory to God" Sing for joy therefore, "O heavens and exult O earth," break forth O mountains into singing, for the Lord has comforted his people and will have compassion on his afflicted (v. 13). As earlier in similar circumstances, the prophet's vision far outstrips the capacity of his audience to see the possible, and by contrast it only throws their own sad and long neglected estate into sharper lines.

Hence at this high point of prophetic certainty and assurance the prophet is called upon to meet several rapid-fire complaints that register objections 8-11: (1) Zion has been forgotten and forsaken of the Lord. The prophet answers in the name of God, "can a woman forget," "that she should have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you." You are graven on the palms of my hands. "Your walls are continually before me. Your builders outstrip your destroyers." Gone are those who laid your waste. Lift up your eyes and see, they all gather and come to you. They shall be your adornment as that of a bride (v.v. 14-18).

(2) Our land is waste and desolate. The prophet's answer is: Surely your wasted and devastated land — "surely now you will be too narrow for your inhabitants" and your devastators will be far away. Your children will say, the place is too narrow for me to dwell in. "Then you will say," I barren, exiled and put away, "who has borne me these?" "Whence then have these come?" "Thus says the Lord," I will lift up my signal to the nations and they shall bring your sons in their bosom and your daughters on their shoulders, "Then you will know that I am the Lord; those who wait for me shall not be put to shame" (v.v 19-22, 23b).[28]

(3) Can the prey of the mighty be recovered "or the captives of the tyrant be rescued?" The prophet replies: Even the captives of the mighty tyrant shall be rescued. I, God will contend with those who oppose you "and I will save your children." Your oppressors shall destroy themselves. "Then all flesh shall know that I am the Lord, your Savior," "The Mighty One of Jacob" (v.v. 24-26). 49:13-26

(4) A fourth complaint, Jehovah has divorced our mother, Israel. The divine reply: "Where is the bill of your mother's divorce" or to which of my creditors have I sold you? "Behold for your iniquities you were sold" and your mother put away. But when I return to you, why is there no

response when I call. Is the hand of the omnipotent God shortened that he cannot save, or has the God who controls all nature no power to deliver (50:1-3)?

Ch. 50:4-8 is often listed as one of four servant poems,[29] though the term servant does not appear in it. It is in reality the prophet's defense of his own integrity, against a clandestine attack by some of his hearers (v.v. 8-9). It therefore marks a climax of opposition to the prophet. The previous objections were directed at the claims and presuppositions of the prophet. This their twelfth was aimed at his integrity as a prophet.

In his defense, he declares, "it is Jehovah, my Lord who has given me a tongue for teaching, that I may know how to sustain with a word him that is weary." The divine message has come to him daily. As "he wakens morning by morning, wakens my ear to listen" as a true disciple. "Jehovah my Lord, has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious, I turned not back." On the contrary I have suffered abuse, persecution, violence and shame. "Because Jehovah, my Lord, helps me, therefore I have not been confounded, therefore I have set my face like flint and I know I shall not be put to shame." "Who will contend with me? Let us stand up together." "Behold Jehovah, my Lord, helps me who will declare me guilty?" All my opposers shall perish like a moth-eaten garment (v.v. 4-9).

In no sense can these verses suitably apply to Israel as a nation. In all details they fit the experience of an individual prophet and are fully applicable to Isaiah II in his persistent efforts to win his fellow Jews to adopt his message.

He has been a true teacher prophet, listening daily to the inner voice of God who has sought to give courage to the weak and faltering. He has remained steadfast as a prophet in spite of opposition, persecution, physical violence and shameful treatment. He has also had to face a whispering campaign against him. He is not sure who his vilifiers are. Let them come out in the open, so there can be a fair trial.

He has no fear of that outcome.

On the other hand, Israel never felt a divine urge to instruct any other people. Israel so far had never been persecuted for its religious beliefs. Israel on the contrary had been confounded and those who remained felt they had been put to shame. Their adversaries were always plainly evident. What the exiles most lacked was confidence in any future vindication.

With 50:10-11, we reach the first evidence in this prophecy of a group of Jewish exiles who are loyal worshippers of Jehovah, even though they grope in darkness, and who are ready to listen to the prophet. For the servant mentioned here cannot be the nation, since those addressed would be a part of it. First, the prophecy thus far gives no hint that any of the exiles were ready to assume the title let alone the task it involved. Second, the servant cannot be an ideal person for no such person has been defined in this context. The very terms used in v. 10 can therefore refer only to one or more individuals in relation to another individual. They could apply to any true prophet but the prophet himself as the servant of God by virtue of his calling is the only candidate for that title in sight. In this passage, then, the prophet capitalizes on this small gain in his favor. Hitherto he has characterized his hearers as both blind and deaf (42:19-20; 43:8). The present group may be blinded but they are not deaf, and the prophet seeks to reassure them that their present trust in God is not only rightly placed but that through it new light will come, since God is the only true source of light and the attempt to seek any other source can end only in disaster. "Who among you fears the Lord and listens to the voice of his servant?" "Though he walk in darkness," "let him still trust in the name of the Lord." [30] For, behold, all of you who seek any other source of light will be like those who bind themselves about with firebrands. "You shall lie down in torment" (v.v. 10-11). 50:1-11

The certainty and nearness of divine help follows. Twice in this passage the prophet refers to devoted Jews who pursue deliverance, "you who seek the Lord" (v. 1). "Hearken to me you who know righteousness, the people in whose heart is my law" (v. 7a). For these the prophet has only the warmest commendation and encouragement, for both, his great encouragement is the promise of a restored and glorified Zion.

Look to your origin, "the quarry from which you were dug." "Look to Abraham your father" and Sarah your mother, "for when he was but one I called him" "and made him many." So Zion shall be comforted, even her waste places. He "will make her wilderness like Eden." "Joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the voice of song" (v.v. 1-3).

This glorification of Zion is, however, to be no mere end in itself. The people and the nation are called upon to take note that a new "law will go forth from me, and my justice for a light to the peoples. My deliverance draws near" and my salvation, the distant coastlands wait for me as their hope. The physical features of heaven and earth may change and pass away, "but my salvation will be forever" (v.v. 4-6).

The prophet's glowing promise of the speedy restoration and glorification of Zion is too much for even his most devout listeners. They remain incredulous and furthermore express their fears for the immediate future because of hostile fellow Jews (see note 32) and thus voice a thirteenth remonstrance. The prophet replies: Fear not the reproach of men nor their revilings, for they shall pass away as a moth-eaten garment but my salvation shall be to all generations (v.v. 7b-8).[31] 51:1-8

"I am he that comforts you." Who are you to be afraid of man who dies like the grass, and have forgotten your Maker, the Creator of heaven and earth, and fear all the day because of the oppressor and the fury of his destruction. "And where is the fury of the oppressor." The day of release of

him who was bowed down has come near. "He shall not die" nor his bread fail, for I am your God, the Omnipotent One. I have put my words in your mouth, I the Creator of all "have hid you in the shadow of my hand," and I say to Zion, you are my people (v.v. 12-16).[32]

To the exiles, however, who could not share the prophet's optimism, yet were, nevertheless, fascinated by his brilliant portrayal of the future Zion, the immediate effect was to remind them by contrast of the heartrending story, that still lived on among them, of the sad and sorrowful downfall of Jerusalem.

It recalled how the city had reeled to its fall like a drunkard, having drunk at the hand of the Lord the cup of God's wrath to the very dregs, with the result that there was none left to guide her, "none to take her by the hand" among all the sons she had borne and reared. "Devastation and destruction, famine and sword" left her desolate. Her sons had fainted at the head of every street, caught "like an antelope in a net." They were full of the wrathful rebuke of the Lord.

This was the picture that dominated their minds, and for the fourteenth time the prophet's vision of the future had been challenged by what was felt to be an insurmountable catastrophe. The prophet vividly portrays this as a moving present scene and then begins his reply as a continuance of that scene by calling upon fallen Jerusalem: "Arouse yourself, stand up, you who have drunk at the hand of the Lord, the cup of his wrath." And then turning to the listening exiles, he speaks directly: "Therefore hear this," you who are drunk but not with wine. "Thus says your Lord the Lord," who pleads the cause of his people. "Behold, I have taken from your hand" the bowl of my wrath, "you shall drink no more," "and I will put it into the hands of your tormentors" (v.v. 17-23). 51:12-23

Jerusalem's deliverance is imminent. Zion is called upon to "awake, put on your strength," "put on your beautiful

garments, O Jerusalem." "Shake yourself from the dust," "loose the bonds from your neck, O captive daughter of Zion (v.v. 1-2).[33]

The coming of the herald of good tidings to Jerusalem, described in 40:9-10, is here presented from the standpoint of the personified city. "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good tidings," "Who publishes salvation, who says to Zion, your God reigns." Your watchmen sing together for joy, "for they see eye to eye the return of the Lord to Zion." "Break forth together into singing you waste places of Jerusalem," for the Lord "has redeemed Jerusalem."

The prophet's vision of the universal significance of God's return to Jerusalem stirs him to call upon even the waste places of Jerusalem to join with the city's watchmen in the fifth and last paean of praise over this world significant event. For "the Lord has bared his holy arm," "and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God" (v.v. 7-10). 52:1-10

The return of the Lord to Zion, thus set forth connects with "the way of the Lord in the wilderness" and the return of the exiles in 40:3-5. They are therefore urged to proceed with that journey, making use of the figure of the Exodus from Egypt. "Depart, go out thence. Touch no unclean thing," "purify yourselves you who bear the vessels of the Lord." You shall not go out in haste or in flight, "for the Lord will go before you" and likewise be your rear guard (v.v. 11-12).

The resortation of Zion and its glorification that precedes, furnish the outward setting for the exaltation of the servant, Israel. This is now presented by pointing to the low estate to which the servant has been brought in the past, so low indeed that many were astonished at his appearance, marred beyond human semblance. So shall his coming exaltation be equally astonishing. Many nations shall do obeisance to him. "Kings shall shut their mouths by reason of

him, because they shall see what has not been told them, and understand what they have not heard" (52:11-15).

With this climax of thought the prophet has presented his complete message as far as he saw it at this juncture. This included the ethical universal God idea, the Jews' return to Palestine, the restoration of Jerusalem and its cities, and Israel as God's servant for the salvation of the world. If even a few of the exiles had accepted this message and, particularly, if no more objections to the prophet's thesis had been raised, the prophecy might have ended at this point. Such a result would have meant that some of his hearers had accepted the role of the servant and hence would have needed no more urging to return to Palestine and set about their world mission.

Not only is there no indication of such acceptance by any of the prophet's contemporaries but at this point there is evidence that the prophet was here faced with his most searching challenge and unless he could meet the argument his own message would have been effectively annulled. That challenge and its answers are now expressed in chapter 53. This evidence must now be examined, and the material for it brings us to what is perhaps the most crucial and controversial chapter in the Old Testament. There are at the outset several preliminary considerations to be taken into account. One of the disconcerting features of the chapter is that all the antecedents of the pronouns used in it are left unexpressed.

A second serious handicap is that the thought of the chapter has been badly warped in translation by both Christians and Jews as the result of preconceived notions about it and the attempt to fit these into the text, as well as the fact that modern translators have generally avoided correcting even the most glaring errors of this sort.

Third, there are certain conditioning factors that need to be recognized in dealing with the passage. First it can only be considered as an integral part of what precedes and

follows. Such a statement should be superfluous in dealing with any connected piece of literature. However, the treatment of this chapter in the past makes this safeguard justifiable in this instance. Second, the aims and purposes of the author which can be established for the preceding context must also include and apply to this section as well. We have already seen what these are and how they inevitably condition all that belongs to this prophecy. There are besides certain facts and obvious conclusions so evident on the surface that they are scarcely affected by defective translation.

The first thing that is clear from any rendering of Is. 53: 1-10a is that the person identified by the third person pronoun is referred to as already dead and buried (v.v. 8, 9, 12c.) and belonging to a previous generation (v. 8). Such person cannot represent the nation Israel, as has been assumed, for at least four reasons. First, a sharp distinction is drawn between "him" and "my people" (v. 8b).[34] Second, "his generation" can only refer to an individual not to a nation. Third, there can be no point or pertinence in saying that the grave of a nation was made with the wicked (v. 9). Fourth, it can hardly be said there was no deceit in the mouth of a nation. Furthermore even if this were possible the concept that Israel was blameless is against the prevailing witness of Scripture, namely, that the nation was punished for its sins.

Second, those who speak in these verses as represented by the first person plural pronoun, identify themselves as individual worshippers of Jehovah God (v.v. 4, 6) and as of the nation Israel, "my people" (v. 8c.). Furthermore, they reveal a true sense of the significance of a great prophet like Jeremiah [35] and the nation's failure to appreciate him while he was still alive, and likewise they also recognize the benefits he might have brought to them if they had heeded.

This attitude is without parallel in any other known Jewish group before, during or after the exile. Only persons

deeply touched by the teaching of a great prophet can explain such sentiments on their part. There is no such prophet discernible in that age but Isaiah II. This fact almost certainly identifies these speakers as sympathetic listeners to the prophet to whom they are now stating their case.

They not only cannot represent other nations, for the reasons already stated, but they know Israel's God better than Israel as a nation ever did. They recognize and accept the prophetic spirit as its best which Israel as a people never could. Israel therefore had nothing to offer or to contribute to them. Moreover, if, as has been shown, the particular person referred to in these verses cannot be Israel, then the supposed nations can only be dealing with an individual within Israel, who could hardly be an object of their scrutiny and much less one with any relevance for them. A positive and more precise determination of the antecedents in this chapter depends on the rendering of 53: 1-10a. The meaning may be interpreted thus: How few have believed what we have heard;[36] and by whom was the servant of God[37] whom we have in mind seen as the arm of the Lord in our midst (v. 1)? He grew up earlier[38] like a young plant, like a root out of dry ground. There was nothing about him that we, his own people, should notice him or be attracted to him (v. 2). Furthermore, he was despised and forsaken, a man of pains and sorrows. And as one from whom men hide their faces, he was despised and we Jews esteemed him not (v. 3). Surely it was the pains caused by us[39] that he bore and the sorrows due to our attitude[40] to him that he endured. Yet we as a people[41] considered him directly smitten and afflicted by God (v. 4).[42]

But we now realize that he was wounded by our transgressions, bruised by our iniquities, and upon him was the chastisement that could have been for our peace,[43] if we had but understood, and with his stripes there was healing for us, if we had heeded (v. 5). Yet we as a people did not heed

and there was no healing for us and the nation perished. For we all like sheep went astray. We turned every one to his own way and the Lord let fall on him the iniquity of us all (v.v.5-6). Though he was oppressed and afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb led to slaughter (Jer. 11:19) like a sheep before its shearers (v. 7). By oppression and judgment he was taken away, and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken by [44] the transgressions of his own people (v. 8). Even his grave was made with the wicked and with the godless [45] in his death, although he had done no violence and there was no deceit in his mouth. Yet it was in the providence of God that all this happened to him (v. 10a).

The outstanding fact that emerges from this narrative, when it is freed from extraneous theories that have been saddled upon it, is that an historical person was known to those who described him as one of the greatest servants of God who lived in Israel's past, that he was despised, persecuted, and rejected, and died without appreciation by his own people.

His name is not given nor was it essential for the use here made of the data. A reason for the omission will appear presently. Those who speak in these verses, whom we identify as Jewish exiles and members of the prophet's audience, have by means of these verses presented their case and made their challenge to the prophet's thesis.

Before analyzing its content, it is to be noted that their latest challenge marks no new technique or innovation in this prophecy, since it is now preceded by a well knit series of definite objections to the prophet's message, offered by members of his audience.[46]

According to its seriousness, their thought here marks the climax of that series. In what then did the challenge consist and what was its occasion?

The basis for their argument is expressed in 52:13-15.

Those who heard these words understood only too well how the appearance of the servant (Israel) had been marred beyond human semblance, since they were what remained. But it was his promised exaltation and the extent of it that seemed to them fantastic and completely improbable. This is now evident from their own thought. The gist of their argument is their description of the life of a great prophet of Israel's past, stated in terms of the nation's experience of a true servant of God in their midst, how the people reacted to him and with what results. In making their appraisal the speakers identify themselves with the nation earlier and so assume a definite share of the nation's blame for its treatment of that prophet. He was "a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," "He was despised and we esteemed him not," but we now know they were sorrows and griefs caused by us. Yet we considered him stricken and afflicted by God himself. Actually he was wounded by our transgressions and bruised by our iniquities as a people. The chastisement that might have been for our peace and well-being as a nation was upon him and by his stripes there was healing for us, if we had but heeded the nation might have been saved. This was not to be, for we all like sheep went astray, we turned everyone to his own way. The nation perished and our common iniquity caused him to suffer in its downfall. He was also directly oppressed and afflicted and by that oppression and judgment he was taken away, and yet no one of his generation ever even recognized that he was cut off out of the land of the living by the transgressions of his people. They went so far as to make his grave with the wicked and with the godless in his death, in spite of the fact that he had done no violence and there was no deceit in his mouth. And so he manifestly lived and died in vain.

Here the argument came to its climax and its challenge to the prophet was meant to be devastating. In brief, it said that in Israel's past there was a great servant of God to

Israel who devoted his life to save the nation, but he was ignored, spurned, rejected, dishonored, condemned and numbered with the wicked when he died; the nation perished in spite of anything he could do. If this could happen to such a true servant of God in trying to save his own people, what prospect and what hope is there even if Israel were to be restored as a people? And no matter how devotedly Israel worked as a servant to save the rest of mankind, what hope was there that they would fare any better or have any greater effect on the larger world? And what hope could there be for Israel's exaltation on such a basis? This was not only a sweeping challenge but its seriousness was enhanced by the fact that the argument used was based on the data of experience. Their thinking was historical in character and on a high ethical plane. As the evidence will show, they believed they were thus able to turn some of the prophet's own teaching against him.

All the lineaments of the unnamed person are applicable to what is known of Jeremiah. Some of them could apply to no other, and all of them could apply to no other known prophet. That the hearers of the prophet could have known in their own right the tradition of Jeremiah's life and fate is not improbable, but that they should accept him as a great ethical prophet calls for another great prophet to thus interpret him, which Isaiah II alone in that age could provide. This the latter not only did but did it so effectively that he won them to accept the prophetic concept at its highest. This could hardly have been done if the prophet had not repeatedly used the life of Jeremiah as a yardstick of what it meant to be a true servant of God.

The indications are that Isaiah II was greatly indebted to and deeply moved by the life of Jeremiah. He shows in this 53rd chapter that he knew intimately the record of Jeremiah's life. He had recognized his devotion as a true servant of God to Israel. He had been moved by his stand as "a fortified city, an iron pillar and bronze walls against the whole

land, against the kings of Judah, its princes, its priests and the people of the land" and how it was said, "they will fight against you but they shall not prevail against you, for I am with you, says the Lord, to deliver you" (Jer. 1:18-19).

Isaiah II was thus able to see embodied in Jeremiah the noblest and truest ideal of the servant of God concept that he would ever know.

But there may well have been a time before the coming of Cyrus, when he felt the same despair, due to the same kind of cause, described by his contemporaries in this chapter. There was no future in sight, for his God concept was blanketed by the dominant foreign gods. But when the concept of the universal ethical God burst upon him, all that despair fled like the deep darkness before the dawn. He saw Jeremiah as upholding the ethical concept of God against terrific odds in relations beyond Israel (Jer. 1:10), and that concept had now been rediscovered by him in its true universal aspect. In the light of that vision he sees himself and his role as servant of God and prophet on the Jeremiah model. He too felt that, like Jeremiah (Jer. 1:5), he had, in the providence of God, been called to his task from birth (Is. 49:1). He felt that God had marvelously fitted him and sheltered him for his task (49:2-3). But when the full significance of his calling becomes clear, like Jeremiah (Jer. 1:6), he feels the weight of his inadequacy (49:4).

The more than national scope of Jeremiah's call (Jer. 1:10) is carried further in his own calling "to bring Jacob back to God" (49:5), in order through Israel to bring salvation to all mankind. He like Jeremiah has faced fierce persecution and never wavered and is ready to stand against any adversary (50:6-8). In his first delineation of the servant (Israel) (42:1-4), the qualities of steadfastness in spite of physical weakness, and endurance while life lasts reflect the Jeremiah pattern.

He could therfore have absorbed and made his own the

spirit of Jeremiah and could well have found in him his highest concept of his own calling and the mission of Israel.

If this were the case, one would expect him to make frequent use of the life of Jeremiah wherever he could reach his fellow Jews, until this figure would become so familiar that Jeremiah's life could be described and recognized without naming him, and particularly so when Jeremiah's example was thus used to challenge Isaiah II himself.

The evidence of the text indicates that this account of the servant prophet had been made to many, but that only a very few had accepted the interpretation given, "Who, or how few have believed what we (all) have heard (53:1)?"

This was to be expected, for the Jewish people had never accepted Jeremiah and the prophetic viewpoint he represented. Those who now "believed" are not deceived by the unprepossessing outward appearance of the servant. They confess their earlier misunderstanding of the cause of his suffering. They know his steadfastness and his efforts that might have saved the nation. They deplore the fact that he was rejected, abused, condemned and brought to his death by the transgressions of his own people, although he was entirely blameless and a true benefactor. All of this delineation was a genuine portrayal of the heroic yet tragic story of a great soul. And Isaiah II is responsible for its contents, for he had made it a yardstick for Israel as a true servant of God. But its use in its present context gave it a sinister turn, of which our prophet had never dreamed. He had just before set forth the tremendous future exaltation of Israel, God's servant, in relation to the other nations, whose rulers do humble obeisance to Israel because of its saving message to them. Those who heard the prophet were incredulous and unbelieving. Some of them recalled the story of Jeremiah's efforts to save their nation, as a true servant of God, which they rated him to be. They, however, were not moved to think of following his example because

it was evident that he had failed and hence had lived and died in vain and that was the end of the trail for them. Where was there any guide to follow or any hope in doing so?

It is to be noted that the prophet's answer is now contained in v.v. 10b-12 which follow. If Is. 53 may be called the crux chapter of the Old Testament, v. 10b might equally well qualify as its crux sentence. More certainly it may be called the most abused bit of known Hebrew text, since all kinds of efforts have been made to alter it. And yet it must probably be granted that none of the proposed changes has ever produced a text that will actually fit the context of the chapter as a whole. In view of this outcome the still more striking fact is that the text as it stands constitutes a grammatical sentence and in its main content all our more ancient sources agree.[47] The main question then is can it form part of the prophet's answer to the above challenge. We venture to say not only that it can, but that it can supply the keystone of the arch of thought involved.

The text may be rendered: "When you make his (soul) life a guilt offering, he shall see offspring, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand." First, it contains a positive answer and second, on any rendering of v. 10b it is stated as a triumphant answer. The answer is in two parts. First, the prophet denies by his statement that the life work of the unnamed prophet is ended and hence it cannot be declared to have been in vain, and second, he will show his challengers how they have the power to carry it on to a triumphant conclusion.

Isaiah II, with his world view of God and mankind, realized that the task of reaching and saving the human race was one that would require the service of many generations. He had provided for this contingency in his concept of the nation as God's servant. But since in its operation, it had to be expressed in terms of individuals and as these

passed away, that spirit had to be caught up afresh from those who had it and embodied in others.

Our prophet would therefore never have thought of a prophet like Jeremiah as having died in vain, first, because he could not think it was essential that the nation Israel should have been preserved, and second, because he would know and appreciate that Jeremiah, for example, had done much to carry on and clarify the ethical concept of God, which was the necessary foundation for the world mission of the servant, Israel.

His reply was in effect: you have rightly estimated the earlier prophet. He was a true servant of God to his generation. He did a great service, but you have overlooked the fact that much of what he accomplished lives after him. He stood for the ethical character of God, in which is the hope of all men. His life story has won you to see in him the truest kind of servant of God.

You have just said that you shared a sense of guilt for the shameful treatment of the prophet by the Jewish people, a treatment that ended in his untimely death, because they failed to accept and appreciate what was for their true welfare, and which the prophet's message alone could bring them. When that sense of guilt in you makes his life seem to have been a guilt offering, an offering, that is, brought about by the nation's guilt, you will then realize that his was the only kind of a life as God's servant that can be most pleasing to God. And at that point, the servant spirit that was in him will live again and come to light in you and thus prolong his (the servant's) days. The pleasure of the Lord which now is concerned for all men, will prosper in his hand. This servant (manifestation) will see the fruit of the travail of his soul and be satisfied because there is no end to all those who can thus partake of and embody the servant character and spirit. The possibilities are not even confined to Israel. For when non-Israelites catch the meaning of the servant's world mission, they too will be

able to embody that spirit (44:5).

By his knowledge shall the righteous ongoing one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, though he shall be burdened with their iniquities (v. 11).

Nevertheless he shall receive a portion with the great and the strong, in spite of the fact that he poured out his life freely to the utmost and was numbered among the transgressors. And while he endured the burdens of other's sins, he also prayed for the transgressors (v. 12). 53:1-12

Such was the prophet's answer to the challenge. He was not only not discomfited by it, but was able to make it a strategic opportunity. As has been indicated, his entire prophecy is centered on the task of first bringing Israel back to God, but specificaly to the higher universal ethical God, in order to lead the Jews to accept the role of God's servant to mankind. He pointed out what the ideal servant would have to do (42:1-4). He used his own experience to depict the character and service of the true servant of God (49:1-6). He made use of the historical example of Jeremiah as a great servant of God to Israel in the past. His loyalty and devotion in spite of the worst things that could happen to him are vividly portrayed. Jeremiah was also called a prophet to the nations and hence a pertinent historical model for Israel as a servant to the nations.

The character of Jeremiah could be made convincing and compelling, but for the Jews who lacked the concept of an ethical God, the end of Jeremiah's career marked the point of despair even to those who had been made aware of his true significance. Their challenging objection gave the prophet a great opportunity to explain how the servant spirit as well as all great ideals are passed on from one generation to another.[48] And hence their adoption and promotion could never be in vain, provided those who come after see them at their true value and make them their very own. The prophet had thereby accomplished two things. First, he had shown how the kingdom of a universal ethical God

among men must at times go forward as the generations pass and how death cannot stop it.

Second, he made it clear how and why the suffering of the righteous under an ethical, loving God may be expected to play an indispensable role in the spread of the kingdom of God on earth. The fate of Jeremiah focused perfectly the thought of Jesus that he who would save his life will lose it but he who dares to lose his life for the highest truth will save it. The prophet had thus forcefully answered their great objection, but would his argument be able to break the barrier of inherited ideas and create in them a new faith?

The challengers had on their own initiative made it plain what had caused the sorrow, suffering, oppression, and finally the untimely death and dishonorable burial of the innocent and righteous servant, who had sought in vain to save his nation from ruin.

The poet, Job, had tried in vain to solve the problem of the suffering of the righteous under a just God. He had failed because he limited the problem to his observations and his own life experience and on this basis no solution was possible, since the experience of other free moral agents was also inevitably involved to explain his fate. Isaiah II was not troubled by the fact of the suffering of the righteous, for he could show that it not only need not be in vain but also how it could have a vital and constructive part in the advancement of truth and righteousness in a universal kingdom of God among men upon earth. His conception of an ethical God would not permit him to think of the unmerited suffering of a prophet like Jeremiah as caused by God himself, much less as a necessary ground for God to grant forgiveness of men's sins.

He had not, therefore, hesitated to state all that this servant of God suffered and why he had to suffer, because he wished to emphasize Jeremiah's faithfulness and devotion to the highest welfare of the nation, no matter what

it cost him.

He had by this means been able to convince at least some of his hearers that the concept thus presented was that of a true servant of God, so that they were able to accept it as valid. Neither was there anything enigmatical to them about the unmerited sufferings of the righteous servant, since these were seen to be clearly due to the failure of the people of Judah to grasp his true significance and to treat him accordingly. But what gave them pause and brought them to a jolting halt was the evident fact that all this suffering and shame had totally failed to accomplish the very thing for which all his life force had been spent.

Isaiah II could, as we have seen, meet this challenge and point the way forward toward victory, but in presenting the portrait of the suffering servant, he had set forth clearly what any true servant of God might be called upon to suffer if he dared to stand up for the highest truth he knew about God and man.

Up to this point Isaiah II had sought to entice and allure the Jewish exiles to accept the ideal of Israel, as God's servant, for the salvation of mankind by asserting that it would bring them a greater and more glorious future than anything their nation had known in the past (52:13-15). Every obstacle that seemed to bar their way to this end, he assures them, shall be cleared away (41:14-16). They are offered the role of the great benefactor to all mankind, a light to the nations that shall free all men from darkness and oppression (42:6-7).

Israel thus far had always been a small nation compared to the great empires on either side. The prophet promises that in their unfolding future many kings and rulers shall voluntarily prostrate themselves before them (49:7) and many nations shall treat Israel with great deference and respect (52:15). He depicts the restoration of Jerusalem on a scale that would make it outstanding in the sight of all the nations (52:9-10).

All these appeals were made to arouse the national spirit of scattered and uprooted exiles far from their homeland to undertake a mission and a calling that went beyond nationalism. In his efforts to gain support for his thesis Isaiah II could not appeal to any love of humanity on the part of his audience, for practically always humanity had been regarded by them as their enemy, with whom at times, to be sure, they might make temporary alliances. There was no room, therefore, for the prophet to make an appeal to their altruism.

There was, moreover, the danger if the prophet were bold enough and content merely to state their world task in its true proportions that it would appear to his audience to be overwhelming. In spite of the prophet's utmost care, this danger could never be entirely averted, but it could be in part, at least, blunted and transformed into an incentive rather than be a deterrent by calling attention to the greater honor and glory that would come to them from accepting it. Such were the limitations of the prophet in presenting human incentives with which to win his hearers.

The prophet could not, accordingly, of his own initiative, state openly what it might cost his hearers as individuals to face this issue. They would have first to be persuaded that it was feasible and worth-while. However, he knew what it had already cost him in persecution, in the form of physical violence, suffering and shame (50:6) to present his case. He also knew in detail what it had cost the unnamed prophet (Jeremiah), the man who had very probably furnished Isaiah II with his highest concept of a true servant of God (53:1-10a).

When, therefore, his challengers had recognized and stated, in language he had often used of Jeremiah, what it had cost in terms of a true servant of God to his own people, only thereby to conclude by implication that the cost was too great, unwarranted and hence no model to follow, Isaiah II was able to say it was a true service, that it was

not too great a sacrifice, for every true servant of God must stand up for the truth, no matter what it costs, that it was warranted, because it was not in vain but a part of the price of advancing the kingdom of God on earth, that it was an example to follow, which any one who caught the servant spirit, as the generations come and go, might have to face to the full. For while the possessor of the servant spirit will by his knowledge make many to be righteous, he still will have to face the burden of men's iniquities, even as in the past the servant poured out his life to the end, enduring the weight of the sins of many and being numbered with transgressors, though he also made intercessions for those same transgressors (53:11-12).

This chapter forms the climax of the prophecy. In it the prophet brings some of his audience the closest to acceptance of the servant role within these sixteen chapters. First the ideal was presented in concrete form. The way to its realization was pointed out; then the return and the rewards it offered; and, finally, the trials and demands it could call for. Would they now be able to take the step that would indicate their acceptance? There is no evidence in the prophecy that they ever did. The prophet's latest explanation of the servant made personal demands, which if stated in terms of Israel, no nationalist in religion could accept. There is evidence to show why they failed. We know of no Jews of this period who ever rose above nationalism in religion. The prophet shows his awareness of their unchanged attitude by what follows. He therefore falls back on further motivations for a restored Zion which might move them. Hence in chapter 54 he resumes his portrayal of the coming joy and glory of Zion, and adds divine assurance of restored and continued favor and the steadfast love of God that will never end. The single figure used throughout of the wife of youth forsaken for a brief time only by Jehovah, the true husband, is used adroitly to counteract still further the earlier complaint (50:1) that Israel

had been divorced by Jehovah and put away (v.v. 1-10).

Zion's beautification with precious stones, the prosperity of her sons, their freedom from oppression and God's assurance of his protection from future attacks are sympathetically and tenderly set forth in lofty, and vivid poetic imagery. If the glowing description of Zion, whose walls from foundation to summit are to gleam with all manner of precious stones, and if the thought of her assured restoration under God as thus set forth could not move the exiles to act in behalf of this ideal, it would be useless to pile up further words about it. The finest superlatives have been uttered. And still there is no evidence of any acceptance of the prophet's message.

At this point the prophet has covered the full range of his appeal. He has had some encouragement from small groups (50:10; 51:7), but no direct acceptance of his main thesis. 54:1-17

6. *A Final Appeal*

The last chapter of his prophecy as it stands, chapter 55, is therefore not a conclusion. The prophet knows that he has not won his case and that the stand of his audience remains essentially unchanged. It is with this situation in mind that he proceeds in this chapter with an overall approach. He realizes that his hearers are outwardly prosperous and hence satisfied with their lot. They do not lack the comforts of life (v. 2), but he declares to them that there is a far deeper inner satisfaction that they are missing. And this is something that can be had without money and without price. These words may well have first been spoken in the market. At least in their present form, the market-place furnishes the setting. A great opportunity is before you. "Ho, every one who thirsts," "and he who has no money, come, buy and eat!" Why do you spend your money and your labor for that which does not satisfy? "Hearken diligently to me," "and delight your souls in fat-

ness." Incline your ear that your soul may live (v.v. 1-3a).

God has a great future for you saying, "I will make an everlasting convenant with you, the favor assured to David." As once I made him "a leader and commander of peoples," "so you shall call nations that you know not" and they shall run to you "because of the Lord your God" (v.v. 3b-5).

You are indeed faced with a unique opportunity, but it will not remain yours if you neglect it. "Seek the Lord while he may be found." "Let the wicked forsake his way," "Let him return to the Lord," "for he will abundantly pardon." Do you think that this is incredible? "My thoughts are not your thoughts nor your ways my ways, says the Lord." "For as the heavens are higher than the earth so are my ways," and my thoughts higher than yours (v.v. 6-9).

Just as the forces of nature under God do not move idly about but accomplish the purpose for which they are intended, and as they affect human welfare, so it is with the divine word that goes forth. It shall not return empty but accomplish all of God's purpose in his uttering it (v.v. 10-11).

Having thus reiterated God's readiness to forgive, his high thoughts concerning Israel and his steadfast power and purpose, the prophet makes his final appeal to his audience. It is, to be sure, in the form of an assurance, but it is the topic with which he began his prophecy, namely, the Exodus from Babylonia. It was the first step they had been asked to take in the beginning. They had not moved. Agreement on this action still remained the initial step to be taken. The assurance given is that it will be a joyous, peaceful excursion, accompanied by the rejoicing and applause of all nature.

"For you shall go out with joy,
And be led forth in peace.
The mountains and hills before you
Shall break forth into singing,

And all the trees of the field
Shall clap their hands."

The forbidding route across the fearsome desert will be transformed into a lovely landscape. "Instead of the thorn shall come up the cypress," instead of the brier, the myrtle. And it shall be to the Lord for a memorial, as an everlasting sign, in a world without end (v.v. 12-13). The prophet had now focused his prophecy on the way home, backed and supported by both God and nature. 55:1-13

7. *The Way Home*

The lack of response by the exiles made it clear that he had failed in his purpose. His contemporaries had so far rejected his message. They might never accept it. It must wait then on others that could be reached, and on the future. But there was one more thing he could do. Israel must never be allowed to forget the way home. He could therefore close his prophecy with a radiant word picture of the Return that could never be forgotten. The result is a splendid, panoramic picture (Ch. 35) now displaced,[49] of an idealized, glorified highway through the desert, blossoming profusely with flowers on either side (v. 1).

The glory of the Lebanon Mountains, the majesty of Mt. Carmel and the beauty of the plain of Sharon shall be given it (v. 2). "For waters shall break forth in the wilderness and streams in the desert." The deceptive mirage shall become the vision of a real landscape (v.v. 1-7).

The highway culminates in a majestic Holy Processional Way as it approaches Zion, and we see the ransomed (exiles) of the Lord arriving triumphantly with singing, their heads crowned with everlasting joy, where sorrow and sighing shall be no more (v.v. 8-10).

This was the homeward way of the Jews that must never be lost sight of, for it was also the way of the future for his people, and above all the way of the future of humanity.

To reach this goal presupposed some kind of return to

Palestine, no matter what program lay beyond that event. Hence, unless the return and the restored community could be made to appear feasible, worth-while and worthy of their efforts, the hope of their future would remain blank. In a word, the opportunity to return home offered by the decree of Cyrus called for readiness to comply as evidence of appreciation of the privilege.

The prophet, therefore, began his prophecy, after a brief note of comforting encouragement, with a call for a highway across the desert from Babylon to Palestine (40:3-5). And he never allowed his audience to forget that it was there and beckoning them toward it. Accordingly as he approached the end of his message and realized his appeal had failed to carry, he concentrated on the glory of the return journey and thus climaxed his efforts with all the incentives he could muster to center the attention of his audience on that first action. [50]

Yet if it had not been displaced, it is doubtful if the chapter could have added enough incentive of its own to change the immediate situation and so result in any noticeable or direct Return. But even in its severed and disconnected state, for as it stands it has no contextual connections, it can scarcely be doubted that it played a significant role because of its compelling beauty and its power to fix forever at the end of the trail the vision of the new and restored Jerusalem (Zion), so that it could become the focus and center of Judaism ever after, and likewise could mirror itself across the New Testament and find expression in the apocalyptic hope of the New Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God (Rev. 21:2).

v. The Unity, Scope and Extent of the Prophecy

As the analysis and interpretation have endeavored to show, the prophecy is a unity from the standpoint of the author's purpose, and limited to chapters 40-55 and 35 [49]. It is, with the exception of relatively distinguishable and

widely accepted glosses, a well-knit literary masterpiece, the frequent interruptions it contains, due to objections raised by the prophet's auditors, notwithstanding.[46] These may by no means have included all the objections raised. Some may have been trivial, but those which the prophet repeated and then went on to answer, he must have regarded as demanding an answer by him if he was to maintain his thesis. The content of his replies justifies his judgment, and hence these varied interruptions far from destroying the unity of the prophecy, only enhance its unitary drive by clearing obstacles from the path that led to his main goal. By these means the prophet made with little doubt the most tremendous attempt known in the history of religion to save a dying faith by seeking to transform it into a higher religion, a universal religion. In this he failed. He failed likewise to arouse any considerable number of Jews to return to Palestine.

vi. Subsequent Influence of Is. 40-55

1. *Direct Influence, The Book of Jonah*

Only one later Jew of the pre-Christian period shows a full awareness and acceptance of Isaiah II's message: the unknown writer of the book of Jonah. The book of Jonah is not a narrative of facts but a symbolical story that has every right to be called an allegory. All its main terms turn out to be symbols. Jonah, the man, is not just a man, nor a prophet. Actually there never was such a prophet in Israel, or for that matter anywhere else. He is rather a symbol of the bitterly nationalistic Jews of the writer's day. Nineveh was not a city of that day but one that had already lain in ruins for several centuries when the book was written.[51] The city itself never changed its religion or accepted the religion of Israel. The author was not concerned with the historical city but used it as a symbol of one of the most cruel, oppressive and wicked dominions of the past, whose ruler had carried North Israel away

captive; if God could pardon such a city, there could be no people in the world on whom he would not have compassion, hence Nineveh was further symbolic of the Gentile world of mankind.

The great fish (1:17) that God prepared to swallow Jonah requires no scientific discussion because it was manifest to all the writer's hearers that Judah had been swallowed up by the Babylonian empire (see Jer. 51:34). The figure was familiar in the Hebrew idiom (Is. 49:19; Hab. 1:13; Is. 25:8). Even the plant which God prepared to make a shade over Jonah's head from the fierce heat of the sun belongs to the same category. What was it in the post-exile period that in spite of the bitterness of the Jews against foreigners gave them hope and gladness for generations? There is only one thing that fits these requirements and that is the hope of a Messiah of the Jews. It sprang up quickly in 520 B.C. and though it persisted after its first violent rebuff, it also proved ephemeral and perished as a national ideal long before the hope of a restored nationalism was given up and transferred to the hereafter.

With these terms clarified, the author satirizes his fellow Jews for their childish stupidity and bitterness of spirit in failing to see the true nature of God. The author treats all his concepts as true and attempts to establish none of them. His book could therefore not have been written till after Isaiah 40-55, for he accepts them all, namely the ethical character of the universal God, the mission of Israel to the rest of mankind, God's concern for the salvation of humanity in a Kingdom of God on earth. However, in three respects he goes slightly beyond his predecessor. (1) He has Israel commissioned to the Gentiles before the exile and makes their attempts to run away from their duty, the reason for their being "swallowed up." In reality he is saying only that it was always potentially their mission in God's sight. And if they could have seen it they would not have needed to be destroyed as a nation (cf. Is. 48:18-

19). (2) Isaiah II had asserted that Israel would bring God's salvation to the ends of the earth. The author of Jonah assumes that the worst of men will repent if given even less than half a chance (Jon. 3:5). (3) Isaiah II had disposed of the Messiah concept by conferring it on a foreigner who was ignorant of the true God. The book of Jonah likens it to an ephemeral and trivial plant, hence, a completely false reliance. (4) Isaiah II had said in God's name, "my salvation shall reach the end of the earth." Jonah's God is filled with pity for all the innocent little children in a wicked world (Jon. 4:11).

If Isaiah II had no contemporary effect, the book of Jonah has failed to make even a ripple on the surface of later Jewish Writings or upon Judaism or on traditional Christianity. Its preservation seems to have been largely due to its character as a miraculous fish story. Its true significance has come about only as a result of the historical study of Israel's higher prophetic religion as a whole. In only one respect did the author of the book fall short of presenting the full message of Isaiah II. He wished to emphasize God's concern for the salvation of mankind, would repent if given a chance. He therefore made the task of Jonah very easy and so left no place for the suffering servant of Isaiah II.

2. *Indirect Influence*

The indirect effects of this prophecy have been immense and far reaching. First, let us look at its relation to chapters 56-66. It has long been recognized that these chapters follow closely the style and vocabulary of 40-55, so closely indeed that not until recent times has a different and heterogenous authorship been proposed for them [52] that would make them his imitators. However, the place, setting and purpose of all these chapters prove to be quite different. There is, for example, no anticipation of a return. The Jews Israel's mission to make it known to all men and that men

are in Palestine and the temple is built. [53]

One thing that completely sets these chapters apart from what precedes is the fact that triumphant, ethical universalism is absent and replaced in every chapter [54] by nationalistic religion.

Second, that the weight of Isaiah II's work plus that of his imitators was great enough to win them canonicity has first to be credited to the former, even though the nationalism of his imitators may have been one important factor in getting them in. That Isaiah II was added to the already bulky compendium called the Book of Isaiah was enough to insure its canonicity. This inclusion may have taken place because it was just another anonymous writing that needed the shelter of a great name like Isaiah's to assure its preservation. And the number of these already in that book may have made it seem appropriate to add one more. But the book of Jeremiah is also a compendium of varied authorship. It contains considerable material dealing with Babylon, and Jeremiah himself was much more nearly contemporary with Isaiah II. Had the latter's name been known as Isaiah, this would have excluded his prophecy from the book of Jeremiah as it would have made its inclusion in Isaiah almost inevitable.

Third, Isaiah II probably did save the dying faith of the Jewish exiles as an end in itself, and assured its restoration to a virile nationalistic religion that has defied the centuries. Such is Judaism and without the concept of a universal God and the hope of a restored center in Palestine, which they owed to him, it is doubtful whether Judaism, as we know it, could ever have come into being. The Jews could rise to the concept of a universal God but not to the acceptance of his universal ethical character. This result was, however, quite foreign to the prophet's aim and entirely against his will. From him the exiles gained a nationalistic monotheism which the prophet did his best to prevent. He succeeded in establishing the ideal of Jeru-

salem as a national Jewish religious center and Palestine as a national heritage for nearly five hundred years, both of which were strictly contrary to his intention.

We see then why the prophet's main message failed to win the Jews of his time, and the same applies to later Judaism. They could not and later Judaism as a whole has never been able to rise above nationalism in religion. The later indirect influence of Is. 40-55 might well have been eclipsed by its incorporation as an appendix to the book of Isaiah. We know, however, that such was not the case. The discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls [55] and their more recent publication now makes it highly probable that the Qumran Sect was established by the latter part of the second century B.C. (140 B.C.) and not only cherished highly the book of Isaiah but possessed at least ten copies of it, two of which have been remarkably well preserved, thereby giving access to MSS of the Hebrew Bible a thousand years earlier than any known hitherto. The Sect established their permanent center in the wilderness of Judea near the north end of the Dead Sea in conformity with and in partial fulfillment of the opening lines of Isaiah II's prophecy, as they interpreted them: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God" (40:3).

That the Sect saw in these words no hint even of a return of Jews from Babylonia or elsewhere is understandable. The Jews including the members of the Sect were already in Palestine and had been there for many generations, and had even gained their independence under the Maccabees, but the members of the Sect saw in the current regime no fulfillment of God's promises but only felt resentment that led them to withdraw into the wilderness, there to prepare the way of the Lord in their own hearts, believing that this would help hasten the time when God would bring true deliverance to his chosen people and restore the promised Messiah over Israel. They thus knew

the prophecy and built their organization on its interpretation, but their nationalism hid its real message from them as fully as from any wordly-minded Jews of that time.

Christianity's first and only direct approach to this prophecy was through its traditional "forerunner," John the Baptist, who identified himself by quoting the passage from Isaiah just mentioned, which identifies his aims with those of the Qumran Sect. He was located in that same wilderness which he never willingly left. His thoughts moved strictly within nationalistic lines. Through this channel, therefore, Christianity gained no significant approach to this prophecy. It would do no better when it turned to the closing part of the prophecy (Ch. 53). For when it did, it would only be to find support for a Christian doctrine it had accepted on insufficient Scriptural grounds and therefore badly needed further Biblical support. This circumstance has proved an effective barrier to any true understanding of Is. 40-55 by orthodox Christians to the present time. Such a result is also only to be expected when it is noted that no New Testament writer shows any awarenes of Isaiah II or the significance of his teachings, and has no room for them in his thought. In spite of these phenomena, the astonishing, paradoxical fact emerges that all the teachings about God and man in Is. 40-55 are now to be found in the New Testament in words attributed to Jesus.

CHAPTER III

THE WORLD OUTLOOKS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

The previous statements call for an examination of the world outlooks of the New Testament and of Jesus, with a presumption that they are not necessarily the same.

The earliest conception of the future that has reached us through the New Testament would seem to be that of the immediate disciples of Jesus, even though they were not clearly or fully convinced of it till after the crucifixion. It centers in Jesus who was to return shortly to earth to exercise his authority as the Messiah of the Jews (Acts 2:23-36). Jesus is now made to share this view while he was still alive and in the most explicit language (Mt. 16: 16-17; 19:28).

We know that this first organized form of Christ's followers came to an end for all practical purposes with the fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. It was a viewpoint repudiated by scholarly Jews, including St. Paul (I Cor. 15:50), and may have been one of the chief reasons for his persecution of the early church. That nationalist outlook is now overshadowed and nearly submerged by the prevailing New Testament viewpoint, which is everywhere dominant and unequivocal. The end of the world is near. St. Paul expected it to come in his generation (I Thess. 4:15).

The first three gospels, although all of them are written a generation or two after that of Jesus (70-100 A.D.), nevertheless make Jesus say that this generation shall not

pass away till the end of the world has come (Mt. 24:34; Mk. 13:30; Lk. 21:32).

It is manifest that Jesus did not hold the two world views just stated, for they are mutually exclusive. That he may have held neither one depends on how clearly and fully the teachings of Isaiah II are to be ascribed to Jesus. But even if these are accredited to him, how can we be assured they are from him any more than the others that are also so ascribed. In the first place, we know that the two views of the future just stated were current in the days of Jesus and in the days before Jesus. He is in no sense responsible for them. It is only a case, therefore, whether for reasons of his own he might have decided to share one or the other of them. These two views, moreover, were not equally widely held among the Jews of that time. We know of no Jewish writer of that day who looked for a Messiah of the Jews any longer. We know of no persons who could read the literature of that time and earlier who certainly held this view. Thinking people had become pessimistic about the future because of hope deferred and frustrated too long. Only members of the artisan-peasant class who relied only on oral tradition were not discouraged but could still look forward to a glorious national future. This phenomenon runs true to general human experience. Seldom are members of this class in any civilization tainted with pessimism, even though their lot in life is usually the harshest of all.

The first disciples of Jesus belonged to this class and from the first they are represented as looking for the Messiah in Jesus (Jno. 1:35-42). They may still have had doubts while he was alive, yet the most discouraging things that Jesus could say to them in this regard on his last journey to Jerusalem, namely, that he was about to be arrested, tried and executed (Mt. 20:17-19) could not deter two of them from seeking to gain clandestinely the promise of the highest posts under his rule as Messiah (Mt. 20:20-24).

After Jesus' death, the first disciples because of experiences after his death [56] were convinced that Jesus was still alive, and on the basis of a supernaturalism of the time which they only dimly understood, they were led to believe that he would shortly return from Heaven to rule in Jerusalem as the Messiah of the Jews. It took forty years to prove that this faith was a delusion. Did Jesus himself share that delusion? That will not be proven by Mt. 16:17; 19:28 but by what other ideas we can be assured that Jesus held. But whether he held such a faith or not, the disciples were bound by reason of their own faith to proclaim that he did and hence it could get recorded.

The dominant world view of the New Testament and the Gentile Christian community of the first century A.D. and ever since which looked for the end of the world "in this generation" finds its climactic expression in the Book of Revelation. It is an example of pure and direct borrowing of Jewish ideas current at the time, at their current Jewish valuation.

Jewish supernaturalism, which is known technically as apocalyptic thought, started out in the second century B.C. as expressed in the book of Daniel. It is the most optimistic faith man ever held. It posited an omnipotent God able to do anything he wished at any time, and his chosen people.

Why should he withhold any good thing from them? Why should they therefore not rule the world? The author of the book of Daniel believed and promised that they would do so in the near future.

Far from being realized, at the end of 250 years this hope ended in complete disillusionment and repudiation of supernaturalism as a Jewish philosophy of life and the future, as expressed in IV Esdras. [57] The Jewish triumph in the Maccabean struggle, seemed to be directly in line with the fulfillment of Daniel, but temporary freedom from outside oppression led to internal political intrigue and religious dissension, out of which arose the later sects of Sadducees,

Pharisees and Essenes. The prospect of national restoration failed to improve, yet the hope, either with or without a Messiah, continued to burn with varying degrees of brightness for nearly a century longer. This attitude, however, was maintained only by a reliance on supernatural divine assistance. Humanly speaking the issue had become hopeless. From the standpoint of the Divine, if God delayed to act beyond a certain point, when the need was evident and with God free to act, faith could not stand the strain. Hence from about 80 B.C. onward the hope of an earthly kingdom faded away. Evidently the powers of evil were too strong for even God to overcome. The one hope left was the projection of the national kingdom ideal into the hereafter, in keeping with the newly acquired doctrine of immortality. It was, however, no longer according to the classic earthly pattern. It had no need of political organization and hence no room for a Messiah. There were no economic factors involved for this was a realm of disembodied spirits, and hence there was no problem of personal or moral relationships. There were no outside enemies and hence no defence to be made against evils. It was in essence, therefore an asylum of Jewish souls in the presence of God, yet not of all such souls, but only of those who had met the requirements of the Law of Moses. This was the Jewish conception held during most of the first century A.D. when Christianity was coming into being and which the early Christians accepted. It was not, however, held by all Jews of the time. The powerful Sadducean class summarily rejected it. It did not permeate the peasant classes. It was held only by those who accepted the supernatural interpretation of history as expressed in the apocalyptic literature of the time. This probably never constituted a majority of intellectual Jews. But even in its altered form this supernatural theory of religious nationalism could not be maintained.

The fall of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. gave to Judaism its

most terrific shock in 500 years. It shattered many false dreams. In the last decade of the first century Judaism produced its first original thinker to deal with supernaturalism in nationalistic religion, the author of IV Esdras. He analyzed and evaluated it and found it an empty and meaningless category. He concluded that if it were true, the meager results it was supposed to achieve were not worth the candle, and it would have been better if man had never been born. Thinking Jews agreed with him and from the end of the first century A.D. Judaism repudiated the supernaturalism of apocalyptic thought as meaningless and delusive.

How did it happen then than this defective philosophy about the future repudiated by the Jews was taken over by Christians and never repudiated? First, the early Christians adopted it during the decades 30-70 A.D. St. Paul was the outstanding architect of this transfer. As a Jew and a Pharisee of the Pharisees, Paul never moved outside of the circle of the chosen people (Israel) concept. But when the Jews rejected his gospel of Christ and he turned to the Gentiles and they accepted Christ, he drew the distinction that acceptance of Christ secured salvation which the law of Moses alone could not do. Hence these who received Christ were the true Israel and henceforth Christians were declared to be the chosen people and therefore God's people in contrast to the Jews who had temporarily at least, lost that distinction. The growing opposition to the Jews hardened that conception and made it permanent in the Christian tradition and caused Christians ever since to look upon it as a high religious distinction and a special mark of divine favor. Hence whatever future lay before the chosen people was now regarded as the expectation and rightful inheritance of Christianity.

As a trained Pharisee, Paul could probably have had no inkling of the fact that the dogma of the chosen people had been repudiated by the great prophets for 800 years, be-

cause it rested on a gross misconception of the true character of God. Paul cannot however be chided overmuch for this lack since Christianity as a whole has to date scarcely advanced beyond Paul's outlook on this matter.

The transfer of apocalyptic thought to Christianity was made at a time when, although such thinking had already lost all hope of any kingdom of God on earth, it was still regarded as valid for the hereafter and for the imminence of the end of this present world. However, before the first three gospels were completed, the expectation of "the end of the world in this generation" as expressed by Paul and others was known to be a misconception. Why then was this claim not repudiated or at least modified or even passed over in silence? To begin with, Paul had not only written of his expectation of the end of the world in his lifetime (I Thess. 4:15), but by making that event center in the second coming of Christ, he could not repudiate it without dislocating and compromising his whole theory of religion and salvation. For he evidently expected that this cataclysmic event would furnish visible verification of the truth of his gospel to his converts who were then alive (I Thess. 4:16-17). Secondly, the first gospel (Mark) if written about 70 A.D., within a decade of Paul's death, was not certainly far enough removed to declare it to be of another generation, but when Matthew and Luke were written (85-100 A.D.) both gospels were of a different generation. Why should the writers not have taken account of this error? The fact that it was in Mark's gospel, which they certainly had before them, was not a sufficient reason for retaining what was no longer true. They did not hesitate to present numerous traditions that varied from Mark's text. The real deterrent was the fact that by 70 A.D. the Second Coming and end of the world in this generation forty years after Jesus' death had been ascribed to Jesus and put into written form.

There was accordingly no manifest way by which this

doctrine could be denied to Jesus at that time. And whether he was responsible for this view could not be known until all the gospel materials could be studied in their proper background.

As a result, traditional Christianity, and perhaps the majority of New Testament scholars, have to date acquiesced in making Jesus as deluded a thinker as the most harebrained apocalyptic dreamer of ancient times. That same Christianity that has declared Jesus divine and very God of very God has at the same time accused him of being deluded about the future, lacking in knowledge of the real nature of the world in which he lived, and less able than the somewhat later leaders of his own people to discern the fallacies and falsities of apocalyptic thought. It is no credit to the mental integrity of Christian theologians who have built their systems of thought on foundations mixed with such flimsy self-contradictions. It is even less creditable to intelligent laymen that they have accepted without using their minds the systems thus concocted. It is no wonder that Christianity thus compromised in its thought basis should fail to transform the civilization where it has prevailed for nearly two thousand years.

To be consistent, Christian leaders and interpreters should have declared Mk. 13:30 and parallels to be either not genuine and true or else admitted that Jesus at least at times, even when he was most emphatic, did not know whereof he spoke. Yet in the environment of a hostile Roman Empire, weak, struggling, persecuted Christianity, with its one bright hope of the speedy Second Coming, involving the end of the world and the hereafter, was in no position to deal with either of the above alternatives.

And Christianity ever since, even as a dominant religion has lacked qualifications required to deal openly with these alternatives of thought as they stand in the record. This, however, should have been possible without involved historical study. The fact was that the rule of Dt. 18:22

("When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord that which does not come to pass or come true, that is a word which the Lord has not spoken, the prophet has spoken it presumptuously. You need not be afraid of him.") when applied to Mk. 13:30 ("Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away before all these things take place"), made Jesus a false prophet "according to the Scripture," and ever more so as time went on. This flagrant contradiction of fact should have stimulated Christians in general and New Testament students in particular to attack much sooner the historical problem involved, and to take note of contrary ideas also attributed to Jesus in the gospels and than they have been thus far to acquiesce in later surface indications for their latest conclusions. New Testament study has oscillated too readily between accepting Jesus as God and regarding him as less than a peer of many Old Testament prophets.

CHAPTER IV

JESUS AS AN ETHICAL PROPHET

We may begin with Jesus viewed as an ethical prophet and seek evidence of his ethical stature in comparison with his Old Testament predecessors. It is to be noted that from the beginning he has been traditionally denied this status by the apocalyptic sayings consistently ascribed to him. Moreover, since no New Testament writer is specific concerning what constitutes an ethical prophet and has no interest in finding out, whatever evidence is available will necessarily be in the form of an unconscious witness and may be expected therefore to be fragmentary and widely scattered. Furthermore, virtually all who listened and reported his sayings were Jews or Jewish proselytes, dominated by the nationalistic religion of Judaism.

Is there evidence, then, that Jesus was aware of the ethical religion of the prophets as something distinct from the prevailing religion of his own day and of his evaluation of it?

Such evidence should be found, first, in quotations from the prophets with indicated approval; second, in allusion to a prophet that would indicate understanding and appreciation of the writing associated with his name; and, third, in the expression of concepts that would require prophetic teaching distinct from the Law of Moses to account for them.

His quotation from the Book of Hosea (6:6) twice reported (Mt. 9:13; 12:7), "I desire steadfast love and not

sacrifice," makes two things clear: (1) that he was able to put his finger on the climax of the ethical message of Hosea, who as one of the greatest of the Old Testament prophets first made clear the ethical love of God; (2) by his introductory words "Go and learn what this means," he showed not only his grasp and approval of the passage but that as a teacher he was in this manner adroitly seeking to introduce to his disciples a truth that was new to them.

One thing that seems certain is that he never succeeded in the limited time at his disposal [58] in bringing this truth to his disciples. There is no evidence that any of his disciples ever tried to go and learn what this passage meant. But what is even more remarkable, there is no evidence that any of the New Testament writers tried to do this thing, nor that later Christian scholars and theologians ever tried to do it, until the rediscovery of the prophetic religion during the last two and a half centuries.

This is not so surprising in the case of the first disciples because Jesus' admonition was revolutionary in character if really faced. It went flatly against the ritualistic requirements of the Law of Moses and excluded sacrifices and offerings as a means of gaining God's favor.

If the disciples had been capable of following Jesus' advice in this instance, they might still have thought of him as the Messiah so far as this verse was concerned. But if they had gone that far in their thinking, they would have learned that there was no Messiah in Hosea nor in that kind of thinking. Furthermore, if Jesus could have presented the same proposition to St. Paul, and if he had been able to accept it, it would have made impossible Paul's entire doctrine of the atonement starting with his interpretation of the Lord's supper. [59]

For centuries since the exile, the Jews were known as monotheists and there are no reasons to think that Jesus would be otherwise minded. However, while the Jews had

accepted from Isaiah II the omnipotence and omniscience of their God, they had not admitted his universal ethical character, for they still regarded themselves as the chosen people. Isaiah II was the first to proclaim the universal ethical character of the one and only God.

All the implications of Jesus' sayings concerning God assume his oneness and universality. His reference to Hosea would seem to assure Jesus' grasp of God as ethical at this point, for he assumes that the passage is true. Jesus also referred to the prophet Jonah thus: Then some scribes and Pharisees said to him, "Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you." But he answered them, "an evil and adulterous generation seeks a sign, no sign shall be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah" (Mt. 12:38-39).

The meaning of the word "sign" in this connection as a miraculous event is clear in the usage of John's gospel (3:2, 4:48, 6:2, 14, 26, 30 *et passim*) and is echoed in the phrase "a sign from heaven" (Mk. 8:11).

Evidently Jesus was challenged on other occasions also to work miracles (Mk. 8:11-12; Jno. 4:48). According to Mark, Jesus refused, saying, "No sign shall be given this generation." Was "except the sign of the prophet Jonah" meant to be a concession?

What Jesus meant by the sign of Jonah has always remained obscure in the tradition as recorded in the gospels. Two of the gospel writers understand it differently. Traditionally, interpreters have looked upon Jonah's experience with and within the fish as miraculous in character. It was, however, difficult to see how this experience could qualify as a sign, at least to any one but Jonah himself. Accordingly, both Matthew and Luke treat the sign otherwise. As for Jesus' reason for his reference to Jonah, a glance at the book of Jonah makes it clear that it involved no concession whatever. Not the least sign of any kind accompanied Jonah's message to Nineveh. Why then did he use it? It is as though Jesus had asked himself, as well he might have

when pressed by this challenge, "How did earlier prophets present their messages?" He then selected the one, unique example in the Scriptures where the simplest possible message without any external assistance accomplished all that God wanted it to do in the larger world. There was thus not only no sign involved but the citation gave Jesus the highest possible warrant for disclaiming any ground or any need for an appeal to the supernatural. The sign of Jonah for Jesus therefore meant that it negatived all such signs. In order to do this, however, it was necessary for Jesus to know the book of Jonah in all its essentials. He had to know, first, the character of God who wanted the most wicked men of the Gentile world to repent in order that he might pardon them that they might not perish in their wickedness but be saved here in this life. Second, there was God's insistent urging that one who knew God should tell it to those who did not know in order that men might have the chance to know God and his willingness to pardon all who do repent, no matter how wicked they may have been. In other words, Jesus was bound to find in Jonah the substance of Isaiah II's message, God's ethical character, his willingness to forgive freely without sacrifices, if only men will repent, his concern for the innocent, his insistence that men who profess a knowledge of God are responsible to make it known to those who do not know him. By these means the book of Jonah could link up a span of 500 years of the higher prophetic religion of Isaiah II with Jesus of Nazareth and make him the second known Jew to accept the message of Isaiah II.

The argument thus far for measuring the status of Jesus as an ethical prophet claims only that in Jesus' references to Hosea and Jonah we find two legitimate channels reported in the gospels that stand as unconscious witnesses to the fact that Jesus had access to the highest religion of the earlier prophets. This conclusion has been emphasized by calling attention to certain results that flow naturally

from taking these references at their face value.

Whether Jesus' thought really bridges the gulf between him and Isaiah II will be tested by the reported teachings of Jesus that go beyond Judaism and require a knowledge of the higher prophetic religion to account for them.

Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount showed that he openly went beyond the Law of Moses (Mt. 5:21, 27, 33, 38). Jesus accepted the most advanced ethical position of the Pharisees, who could summarize the Law of Moses in terms of love to God and neighbor (Lk. 10:25-28) thus eliminating the ritualism and sacrifices of the Temple. Jesus showed his superior ethical perception when he went beyond the Pharisees and made two summaries of both the Law and the Prophets: (1) in terms of love to God and neighbor (Mt. 22:36-40); and (2) in terms solely of human relations (Mt. 7:12, thus eliminating all required ritualism in religion. Jesus maintained his ethical consistency in this respect concerning baptism, which was first inaugurated as a Christian rite by Peter, but without any command by Jesus (Acts 2:38. For although Jesus submitted to baptism by John, he himself did not baptize (John 4:2) nor did he command his disciples to do so.[60]

If Jesus accepted the ethical concept of God, he would know as the prophet Amos had taught, that the chosen people concept was excluded (Am. 9:7). Jesus' definition of neighbor in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk. 10:29-37), as a person whom one should love as one's self, by his choice of characters obliterated forever every barrier that can hinder the neighborly relation between human beings and likewise made it impossible for any group on Jesus' plane of thought to declare themselves the chosen people or in any particular sense God's people.

Because Jesus sensed the ethical character of God in the book of Jonah, he realized the conditions of divine forgiveness. In the parable of the Prodigal Son, the pardon of the Prodigal rests solely on the resolve of the penitent to arise

and go to his father. The father running to meet him, in his eagerness to forgive, strikes a note that is frequent in Is. 40-55. "I, I am he, who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins" (Is. 43:25; 40:2; 44:22). Nowhere is there a hint that the innocent first-born son had to pay a penalty or had any part in the transaction except in finding fault with the father's loving forgiveness.

Jesus' warning that one requirement for entering the Kingdom of God calls for a righteousness that must surpass that of the Scribes and the Pharisees who were meticulous in keeping the Law of Moses, strikes an ethical note that goes beyond the do-nots and the motivation of prosperity of the Ten Commandments, and is found only in the prophets (Mt. 5:20).

Seeking God's kingdom carries with it seeking God's righteousness (Mt. 6:33), and how far this is to be an aim is to be seen from another saying of Jesus, "You therefore must be perfect, even as your Heavenly Father is perfect" (Mt. 5:48). This righteousness is thus seen to be a quality of God's character, which may also become man's possession, and happy is he who hungers and thirsts for it, because that is what is needed to assure its possession (Mt. 5:6). Righteousness is therefore a quality that is worth defending to the uttermost, and blessed are those who suffer persecution for its sake, for that is one mark of those who belong to God's kingdom (Mt. 5:10).

Our oldest gospel declares that Jesus began his public ministry by saying, "The reign of God is near; repent and believe this good news" (Mk. 1:15). There had been numerous conceptions of what was meant by the kingdom or reign of God in his day, and his statement would cover several of them. One of the most prominent, proclaimed at the time by John the Baptist, was that the Judgment, the end of the world, and the hereafter were at hand. Whatever Jesus had in mind at the time, later on he had taken a

position diametrically opposed to the current apocalyptic expectation of the speedy end of this world.

When certain Pharisees asked him one day when the kingdom of God was coming, very likely meaning when the final Judgment and the end of the world would take place, he said "The kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed," that is, in the spectacular manner described by the apocalyptists, "Nor will they say lo, here it is! or there! for behold the kingdom of God is within your reach" (Lk. 17:20-21).

The last clause has hitherto been rendered "within you" or "in your midst" neither of which has ever made sense as addressed to the Pharisees by Jesus. But the new rendering has been verified since 1948 in secular literature of the first and second centuries A.D. and in the early Church Fathers.[61] The recovered meaning came too late to be incorporated in the Revised Standard Version of the New Testament which appeared in 1946. This rendering furnishes a complete antithesis to the supernatural end of the world as held by Paul and other New Testament writers and ascribed to Jesus in Mk. 13:30 and parallels.

The above antithesis is not only complete but many sided. First, the coming of the kingdom is to be marked by no spectacular outward signs or manifestations in the physical world; in other words there is no hint of any end of this world. Second, the coming kingdom does not depend on any supernatural divine intervention in the world of nature or of man, because God has already done all that was possible for him to do until man does his part. Third, the coming of the kingdom thus depends on man's initiative, upon his meeting his responsibility of making moral choices in accordance with the will of God and the nature of the universe thus requiring the kingdom of God to be in this earthly life.

This concept was first proclaimed by Isaiah II; only Jesus in the first century A.D. voiced it, thereby showing his awareness and acceptance of the earlier prophet's ideas

of God, man, and the world, for even though he acknowledges no indebtedness to Isaiah, neither does he claim any credit for the ideas.

Jesus' concept of the growth of the kingdom in an orderly manner from the smallest beginnings till it comes to fruition is expressed in the parable of the sower (Mt. 13:1-9), the mustard seed (Mt. 14:31-32), and especially in the parable of the leaven (Mt. 14:33). These parables conform perfectly to the concept of the kingdom of God here and now, but always were incongruous in an apocalyptic setting.

If as has been indicated Jesus was cognizant of the religion of the prophets, we should expect him to realize that the concept of a messiah-king who was to come was a nationalistic, political expectation and hence the pre-exilic prophets who threatened the doom of the nation would not sponsor it; inasmuch as he sensed the ethical universality of the teachings of Isaiah II, he could be expected to understand why that prophet could confer the Messiahship on a foreigner who had no interest in Israel and who lacked knowledge of Israel's God (Is. 45:1, 5).

What is the witness of the gospels which assume that he was the Messiah? In the one instance in the synoptic gospels where Jesus asks his disciples in what role they are thinking of him, Peter declares that he is the Messiah. In all three gospels Jesus charges them to tell no man that he is the Christ, and he apparently does his best to dissuade them from thinking such thoughts by declaring that he was soon to be arrested, condemned and executed by his enemies. Peter senses how this would make his messiahship impossible and tries to rebuke him accordingly (Mt. 16:22). And in the only gospel in which Jesus is said to approve Peter's confession (Mt. 16:17-19), the lateness of this passage is evident from the fact that it has nothing to say of Jesus' Messiahship, in which Peter and the disciples were primarily interested, but only of the relation of Peter alone

to an institution ("my church") which was not yet in existence, about which as an institution there is no evidence that Jesus had ever before spoken to his disciples, or ever did later, also of which Peter could have known nothing and in which neither he nor the other disciples could have had any interest. This passage could logically only have been written when the word Christ had lost its historical meaning as a political ruler and when he was looked upon as head of the Gentile Christian Church and when the priestly hierarchy of the Church had become so totalitarian in authority that it could decide who could enter the church and therefore who could go to heaven. This flatly contradicts Jesus' presentation of the kingdom (Lk. 17:21, see page 103).

The twelve disciples could think of a time when Jesus would sit on a glorious throne, and they also would sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel (Mt. 19:28). But they knew quite well that this could not happen in their day in Palestine without first destroying the Roman Empire in the Near East. Furthermore, had they been able to give full credence to words attributed to Jesus of which they may have been the first reporters such as: "Do not resist one who is evil, but if any one strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also" (Mt. 5:39), and above all, "love your enemies," they would have known that Jesus could not have been interested in any throne in Jerusalem, and that by these words he had closed any door that might seem to have been left open to such an eventuality.

The facile assumption that Jesus must have been a child of his age and therefore because one of his disciples during Jesus' ministry declared him to be the Messiah, he must have thought so himself, is doubly discredited. First, the prevailing ideas of any age or era are determined not by illiterate peasant thinking, but by the ideas of the literate who have access to the thinking of the past. And we know of no members of the literate Jews of Jesus' day or for a

generation earlier who looked any longer for a Messiah-king. Second, if Jesus had a "messianic consciousness," the historic pattern of the Messiah limited him to political ambitions to rule over the Jews, but with no concern for the Gentiles except to clear them out of the way of the Jews or perhaps to rule them with a rod of iron (Ps. 2:9). Christian thinking has been able to escape from this blind alley of thought only by substituting an unhistorical concept of the messiahship which had nothing to do with Jewish hopes.

Jesus came from the artisan-peasant class (Mt. 13:55, Lk. 4:22) but the gospel tradition grants his literacy (Lk. 4:16-20) and his ability intelligently to "search the Scriptures" (Mt. 5:21-42; 9:13). We have also seen him able to appropriate the most advanced ethical thinking of the highly educated Pharisaic class (Lk. 10:25-28) and to go beyond it (see page 101). Furthermore, as we shall see, there were other ideas and circumstances that hitherto have been overlooked, which made it impossible for Jesus to think of himself as a future Messiah.

The further assumption that Jesus, as a child of his age, must have shared all the fallacies and superstitions of that day including demoniac possession as the cause of disease and sickness caused by sin rests upon the long list of miracles ("signs from heaven") and magical acts now ascribed to Jesus which grew up during forty years of oral tradition after Jesus' death before being collected and written down in the gospels. These stories cannot be harmonized with Jesus' own denial of such phenomena (Mk. 8:12) and his reference to Jonah, by which he was saying in the strongest language at his command that his teaching would be accompanied by no miracles or magical acts.

Not only the majority of Christians but relatively few Christian leaders have dared to face this antithesis and take their stand with the reported words of Jesus against the later tradition of his deeds. The miraculous deeds have their parallels in other religions that have founders, and their

explanation in the field of medical missions.

One added reason for taking Jesus' words about signs at their face value, is the fact that in so saying he was taking his stand with all the greater prophets who preceded him. And when that stand is taken there remains in the gospels very little to indicate Jesus' attitude to the current superstitions concerning demons and related matters. But with the evidence of Jesus' ethical stature, we might well seek some further indication of his attitude by referring to the example of a great prophet who lived seven hundred years earlier: "And when they say to you, Consult the mediums and the wizards who chirp and mutter, should not a people consult their God? Should they consult the dead (the realm of spirits) on behalf of the living (Is. 8:19) ?"

Moreover, Jesus' attitude on the relation of sin to calamities or infirmities is ethically clear and emphatic apart from the miracles (Lk. 13:1-5; Jno. 9:2-3). We venture to say that the evidence adduced proves that Jesus' teachings measure up to the highest ethical standards of the prophets who went before, and therefore that he did bridge the gulf in ethical teaching between him and Isaiah II, and hence this fact points the way to the true understanding of his message.

Still one other piece of evidence that he accomplished this task is the undeniable fact that in any case he went beyond all the prophets who preceded him. The theory of God, man, and the world had already been stated in universal terms by Isaiah II, and there was nothing more for Jesus to say about it. But in the application of that religion almost nothing had been done in the field of human relations beyond the limits of the chosen people concept. It was in this field that Jesus made his own specific contributions by universalizing all human relations on an ethical basis of justice and love that never forgot the dignity of the individual or the sacredness of personality, and thereby provided the only means now in sight that could ever assure the kingdom of God on earth.

It remains to be remarked that this discussion of Jesus' teaching has brought forward no new items nor presented any new values not supplied by previous lack of accuracy of translation. These high ethical teachings of Jesus have always been known. Why then have they not been considered organically and their demands recognized as the highest guide of life? Undoubtedly, the later theory that Christ's death rather than his teachings provided the means of salvation was a dominating cause, but as now seems probable, there was a far deeper cause, which gave the death atonement theory the right of way, and that was the absence of any ethical norm by which to estimate Jesus' teaching. Such a norm is found in the missing span of ethical religion contained in the unquestioned teachings of Isaiah II, as stated in the beginning, but which for reasons given have hitherto never been available for ongoing religion.

Even if our thesis were at this point granted a tentative acceptance, there remain important questions still to be asked. For one thing if Jesus were such an ethical teacher, why did he not make his message so unmistakable that it could never be misunderstood? It is to be noted that no great prophet ever got his message accepted during his lifetime or left it after him as he intended it. All the writings of the prophets who went beyond nationalism in religion have been so arranged and edited that they now appear to teach nationalistic religion. If the book of Jonah is an exception, it is only because it was not clear in the past that it taught anything religious.

In view of this record, what right have we to expect that Jesus as a great prophetic teacher would be understood and accepted by those who heard him and his message preserved intact by posterity, when he wrote nothing himself and his ministry lasted only something over one year? We are not surprised therefore, granting Jesus to be a person of the highest prophetic rating, that his message does not appear on the surface of the New Testament. Nevertheless, in

spite of the first disciples' dominant religious nationalism imbedded in the gospels, and the work of St. Paul and others filling the New Testament horizon with an apocalyptic supernatural world outlook, the astonishing thing is that so little digging beneath the surface is required to uncover the basic prophetic teaching of Jesus.

Another legitimate question deserves attention. If Jesus understood and made such use of the prophets, why is it that he apparently made only two references to them?

Since Jesus' knowledge and use of the prophets can reach us only through those who did not comprehend the prophetic religion, any such reference that stuck sufficiently to get recorded later needed to have other motivations than the truth conveyed by the prophetic writer.

Such interest and motivation are to be found in Jesus' reference to Hosea. First, while it probably did not for Galileans challenge any religious dogma for they were too far from the Temple, it must have seemed to them at least a striking paradox. Second, it raised a problem but threw the burden of solving it on the audience. Third, it was puzzling to the listeners. Both times it is reported, the context shows it was not understood. Fourth, there was a strong implication that it was taken from the Scriptures but there was no attempt to associate it with any name. Fifth, the lack of any ready solution very probably raised a further query, why did he ask them to do something and then give them no light on the problem?

The same extra interest is especially noticeable in the reference to Jonah. Whether his followers had heard Jesus say there would be no sign given to this generation, his remark seemed to be a concession that there were miraculous signs. The difficulty was to determine what constituted the sign, for the book of Jonah did not throw light on it. This was intriguing. Attempts were made to solve the enigma, two of which have been recorded. Matthew (12:38 ff.) tries to make the sign refer to Jesus by the analogy of Jonah's

experience, but the outcome results in no observable sign whatsoever. Luke, with Matthew before him, seems aware of this difficulty and seeks to make it clear that if there was a sign it had to be a sign to the people of Nineveh (Lk. 11:29 ff.). But what neither Luke nor any one else could explain was in what sense Jonah was a sign to the Ninevites. This left room for further discussion and thus kept interest alive in the reference, which helped preserve it in memory. Jesus may well have made several other references to the Prophets quite as significant as the two reported, but if they were not otherwise noticeable, we should have no ground to expect they would be preserved.

A more far-reaching question is: If Jesus was acquainted with the prophetic religion, how did it happen that he was the only Jew since the author of the book of Jonah and until modern times to be cognizant of that religion as expressed in the teaching of Isaiah II? Did Jesus reach his religious outlook by the normal processes of human thought? This is the assumption of the synoptic gospels in spite of a later excision from the text.[62] They grant him a special endowment of the spirit at his baptism, but they do not grant him omniscience (Mt. 24:36) for his temptations immediately follow his baptism. Only in John's gospel does the baptism make him God and from that point onward he is represented as knowing all things, particularly all things that are to happen to him. Logically therefore there is no temptation in John's gospel.

But if Jesus thought his way through to the prophetic religion in its highest form, can we discern any of the processes by which he arrived, or the point from which his thought started? There are no autobiographies of the prophets. To some extent, however, we can discern certain probable steps by which a given prophet arrived at new and higher insights.[63]

CHAPTER V

JOHN THE BAPTIST IN THE LIGHT OF THE DEAD SEA SCROLLS

Until very recently we have known nothing about Jesus' mature thinking before he began his public ministry, but the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls has opened up a new vista on the life and thought of Jesus. The key figure that makes the difference is John the Baptist. It is not that the Scrolls give us any new knowledge of John but that they supply us with a new setting and background.[64] We had earlier seen the characters in the picture but very little of their true setting; now that we see more of the setting, not only is it a different picture but the characters also appear differently.

Hitherto John the Baptist has been regarded as a lone and enigmatic figure in an otherwise empty and forsaken wilderness. The discovery of the religious sect at Qumran near the northwest shore of the Dead Sea in 1947 has completely changed that picture. We now know that in that desolate, grim, and forbidding wilderness of Judea, there was a center of one of the best organized, most devoted, most enlightened, best disciplined religious brotherhoods in Palestine of that day, whose history extended back probably more than a century. Their solid, commodious building contained all the appurtenances of a well ordered medieval monastery complete with a library extensive for that day.

That library we know contained not only the canonical books of the Hebrew Scriptures, but often numerous copies

of the same book. It also possessed at least ten copies of the book of Isaiah, two of which were preserved measurably complete thereby giving us the earliest text of one of the longest books of the Bible in the original Hebrew. The library also contained much other religious and secular literature. The building also provided a *scriptorium* or writing room equipped with a large built-in table and materials for writing and for copying the Scripture. It was a requirement of the sect's discipline that the reading and interpretation of the Scriptures went on there both day and night (Ps. 1:1). The members of the sect were there with the over-all purpose of preparing in the desert, but primarily within their own hearts the way of the Lord and of making his paths straight (quoting from Is. 40:3) in order that they might thereby be ready and also hasten the time when God would restore their nation, Israel, which was to be dominated by a priestly religion having an anointed priest who would take precedence over the political Messiah of Israel.

This we know was their outlook about 100 B.C. Just what it was by 30 A.D. has hitherto not been clarified, but we do know that all known enlightened Jews during that period except the Sadducees drastically changed their outlook about the restoration of the nation. John the Baptist first appears as a grown man in this same wilderness and so far as we know he never left it of his own accord.

His relation to the Qumran Sect is not directly discernible. His membership cannot be proven. He shares, however, many points in common with the sect. First, his definition of himself as a voice in the wilderness crying "prepare the way of the Lord make his paths straight," aligned him directly with the dominant aims of the sect. Second, his requirement of baptism as a sign of repentance tallies closely with the sect's many washings and cleansings with water and their insistence that such ablutions could never take the place of inner cleansing of which they can only be symbols but never substitutes. Third, the possibility has

been admitted that John might have been adopted and reared as an orphan by the sect, since there is a tradition of such adoption,[65] and since he was of a very high priestly family, both parents (Lk. 1:5) being of the house of Aaron, and themselves very old when he was born.

If such were the case, that he was later expelled or withdrew from the sect is by no means a necessary conclusion. For if he was a member, his going to the Jordan only a few miles away did not take him out of the wilderness. He went only as far as was necessary to find sufficient fresh water for baptizing large numbers of people.

Furthermore, the concept of the Teacher of Righteousness or the Right Teacher or Expositor as used in the Scrolls is evidently derived from Dt. 18 and 33.[66] It was the thought of Deuteronomy that a leadership after Moses would continue, like that of Moses, not only to interpret the law historically but to point out new meanings and applications that had not before been grasped and also to provide fresh oracles from God to meet new emergencies.[67] Moreover, since Deuteronomy appeared at a time (621 B.C.) when there was no thought of an impending supernatural end of the world, there would seem to be no reason *per se* to assume that every reference made to a Teacher of Righteousness by the Sect would necessarily apply to the same person.[68]

It is known that the Sect made a quite wide range of reference to this "Teacher," e.g. two references to the Teacher in the past, one of them as the "Unique Teacher." Another applies to the writer's present, still another refers to the future.[69]

The fact that the Qumran Sect was the first known Jewish group to exemplify the suggestion in Dt. 18:18, and that their first Teacher was probably the founder of the Sect who also established their first permanent headquarters in the desert, make it understandable why they would highly honor and revere him and accordingly make so many writ-

ten references to him that enough of these have been preserved to make it possible to place him with an assurance approaching certainty at about 150-80 B.C., but without being able to discover his real name (which is still puzzling) or to reconstruct his career.[70]

The fact that they revered him as their unique Teacher did not mean either that he displaced Moses, which would have destroyed the basis for the Zadokite priesthood on which the Sect was founded, or that no room was left for others to succeed him, but rather that they regarded themselves as the true Israel, "The Elect" under the Law of Moses which provided for a continuing living leadership, like that of Moses. Hence, during the approximately 150 years after the first Teacher, there must have been distinguished members of the Sect who could qualify for that distinction and there may well have been occasions when he was very much needed. But more especially, if at any given time the entire outlook of the Sect changed, we should expect a "Right Teacher" to arise to lead in giving it expression for the Sect.

It has more recently been pointed out and verified that the Essenes of Qumran prove to be the bearers and in no small measure the producers of the apocalyptic tradition of Judaism that passed directly into the new Christian Faith.[71]

The Daniel phase of apocalyptic thought provided for a Jewish earthly kingdom as did the Sect's Manual of Discipline with its two Messiahs.[72] But did the members of the Sect that was so well supplied with the earlier apocalyptic literature and who must be reckoned among the leading *literati* of their time, suffer no change of outlook on the future of Israel in this life, particularly around the beginning of the Christian era, when other thinkers were so affected? According to the most recent reports, later apocalyptic writings, including the Assumption of Moses, are not found in the Qumran Library.[73] However, if the Sect was one of the main and direct sources of Christian apocalyptic

thought, its members could hardly have failed to share its later Jewish phase which gave up the hope of any earthly kingdom and looked for the coming Judgment and the Hereafter, since that became the dominant view of the New Testament.

Evidence for such change of outlook is to be found, first in Hippolytus (c. 200 A.D.), who ascribed to the Essenes a doctrine of world judgment calling for the destruction of the present world by fire and second, from the direct writings of the Sect itself, as found in the "Psalms of Thanksgiving" (III 19-36).[74]

This new viewpoint perforce marked a complete and revolutionary departure from the motivation which brought the Sect into being and drove them into the desert. They organized to preserve the true priesthood of Zadok for the temple service in Jerusalem, when they as the elect would have that privilege. Both the priesthood and the temple service in Jerusalem would lose all point if the immediate prospect was the Hereafter. They went into the desert and built their fortress in order to prepare in their hearts the way of the Lord for the coming of the anointed priest of Jerusalem and the anointed, the Messiah of Israel, to rule in Palestine. In the Hereafter neither of these officials could have any function or meaning.

And in preparing for the final earthly event of the Judgment, there was nothing they could do any better in the wilderness than elsewhere. The reason for this was that all the later apocalyptists, who look for the end of the world rather than for a restored kingdom of the Jews, are agreed that this cataclysm depends solely on God and nothing that man can do can hasten or hinder the time-table of that event, although more and more its coming was regarded as imminent. These considerations would seem to indicate that the Qumran Sect went through the same phase of disillusionment as all other apocalyptists of their time, including St. Paul.

If this was the case, there is no known Teacher of Righteousness indicated who could lead in formulating this revolutionary change, as we have every right to expect there would be. Any verifiable name has so far escaped us.

The new outlook would also call for a new appraisal of "the Elect," the true Israel. These would no longer comprise those who were to inherit the kingdom in Palestine, but those who were fit for the Hereafter, which is not quite the same thing. Because of the high ethical principles of the Sect, a new standard of acceptance with God would almost inevitably be called for. It would not be sufficient to define the elect simply as those who joined the Sect, for now all Jews would be compelled in a very short time to decide on their fitness for the world to come; to do nothing about it could have an even more fateful result.

Here was the basis for a great moral call to repentance by the Qumran Sect that should have reached not only beyond their stone walls in the desert but beyond the wilderness. The striking fact is that John the Baptist is the only known person in that wilderness to make that very appeal so that it was heard beyond the desert. John is also the first person we know of to sponsor publicly the doctrine of the impending judgment and end of this world.

The doctrine of supernatural divine intervention in the Jews' behalf (apocalyptic thought) had appeared and continued to manifest itself in their literature for over two centuries, from Daniel onward, but its authors always appeared under assumed names. None of them would take open responsibility for what had been written. This was as true of it when it expressed the absolute optimism of Daniel as when it voiced the complete despair and disillusionment of IV Esdras. John became its first public announcer and direct apostle. He also took as his own definition of himself the motto text of the Qumran Sect: "The voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare the way of the Lord. Make his paths straight" (Mk. 1:3). The

motivation was the same, but the content was an entirely new and "Revised Version," and it called for an urgency and all-out public appeal unknown to the earlier Essenes.

It has been noted that the Qumran Sect, according to the written records of its earlier efforts, did not appeal to the general public as John did, but interpreted its faith only for the elect members of the order.[75]

The new outlook gained by at least some members of the Sect must, it would seem, have taken place in this same period covered by John the Baptist. And the motivation it provided might well, from an inner urge, have thrust them out of the desert and throughout the settled land. This so far as is known never occurred. Moreover, John the Baptist never left the wilderness of his own accord to preach his message to anyone, as well he might have, judging from its urgency. That he did not, under the circumstances, at least suggests that there might have been restraining influences in the wilderness itself.

On the basis of the evidence, some members of the Sect must have shared essentially John's point of view. That they ever constituted a majority of the members can probably never be proved. But that there were always members of the Sect who did not believe that the world was coming to an end even when they learned that Jerusalem was besieged by the Roman legions, and that they would have to flee, cannot be doubted. The great care and thoroughness with which members prepared the books of their precious library for storage—binding them in linen, storing them in jars sealed with bitumen, and hiding them in caves was not the behavior of men who expected the world soon to end in a cosmic conflagration. It would seem certain that they fully expected that some of their members or their descendants would come back some day and retrieve the cherished books.

If John lived a lonely, isolated life in the desert, how could he have been aware of contemporary intellectual and literary trends? Those were trends of which the first peasant

disciples even though they lived in the cultivated land were quite unconscious. There is no evident answer to this query any more than there is an explanation of how John could have spent years alone in the desert later to emerge as a great prophet. On the other hand, if he had been a member at Qumran, as several scholars maintain, we should expect him to be in touch with the most advanced thinking of his day and perhaps its leader.

He could, furthermore, have been a learned and erudite person, and he could well have spearheaded the new teaching. Without being able to determine John's actual relation to Qumran, a close contact with the Sect is the one thing that can adequately explain the background and motivation of his message in that wilderness. Likewise, the primitive and meager character of his food and clothing are not necessarily a mark of his ignorance, poverty or uncouthness, but are closely paralleled by the austerities of the Qumran Sect. They could have been the marks of an ascetic scholarly saint and prophet, and a "teacher of righteousness," and not to exclude even a real "martyred teacher of righteousness," in the end.

But whatever the precise details of his relationship, whether the Sect accepted him as a member or as a leader of the new trend of apocalyptic thought or not, his own message under the circumstances is clear and explicit. He was the prophet of the coming end of the world and the judgment, a prophet of doom.[76] The gist of this is expressed thus: "His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and gather his wheat into the granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire" (Mt. 3:12; Lk. 3:17). Its background is set forth thus: "For behold the day comes, burning like an oven, when all the arrogant and all evil doers will be stubble; the day that comes shall burn them up, says the Lord of hosts, so that it will leave them neither root nor branch" (Mal. 4:1); and further, "Behold I send you Elijah the prophet before

the great and terrible day of the Lord comes" (Mal. 4:5). Elijah was here a prophet who was to come not as a forerunner of the Messiah but of the last judgment.

CHAPTER VI

JESUS, JOHN THE BAPTIST AND THE PROPHETS

The early followers of Christ were puzzled as to how to deal with the tradition about John the Baptist. First, they could not explain why Jesus was baptized by John. Second, was John a competitor or a supporter of Christ? Evidence of early rivalries between the followers of John and Jesus are reflected in Jno. 3:26, 4:1 and indirectly in Mk. 2:18, Mt. 9:14. As John and his disciples receded into the background the sayings of Jesus regarding John and the fact that John had baptized Jesus had to be treated in a way that could leave no doubt of the superiority of Jesus. This was no easy task.

The fact that John preceded Jesus, and that he proclaimed that one mightier than he was to follow, made him a forerunner of something, but what it was he foreran would depend on his outlook as shown by his message. The fact that he preceded made it easy to think of him as Jesus' forerunner.

The tradition that assumes Jesus was the Messiah labors to have this confirmed by John. But first, the tradition is equivocal as to whether John knew Jesus before his baptism. Neither Mark nor Luke claims that John knew, but Matthew is explicit that he did (Mt. 3:13-14). John himself, however, (Jno. 1:31) denies that he knew him beforehand.

The figure of the winnowing fork and the chaff is similar to the judgment scene in Mt. 25. There are here no political

functions of a Messiah of the Jews.

Several important conclusions flow from these observations: (1) It is doubtful that John knew Jesus before his baptism. (2) John had no place in his thought for a Messiah. (3) He was a forerunner not of the Messiah but the end of the world. (4) Although John is said to witness to Jesus as the Son of God (Jno. 1:34), he is also represented as uncertain as to Jesus' identity (Lk. 7:19).

The most outstanding fact that comes out of all this is that Jesus knew that John's message gave no hope of a Messiah, but of the end of the world, that John was, in other words, the first public advocate of pessimistic apocalyptic thought. Jesus accepted his message as did many others of the time and so was baptized by him. It made Jesus an apocalyptist with an outlook on the future of this world essentially the same as St. Paul's.

It is said that people came to John from Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about Jordan (Mt. 3:5). It does not say that any one but Jesus came from Galilee, but there is evidence that others also came from there (Jno. 1:35-42). This called for a much greater urge to make a journey, for it would require at least the better part of a week on foot. It was therefore no holiday motive of curiosity that took Jesus on the long journey to the Jordan. Furthermore, his baptism on the basis of John's message could give him no sense of mission except as a promoter of John's message and hence as John's disciple. What further evidence is there that this is what happened?

According to the first three gospels, Jesus' baptism is followed directly by temptation in the wilderness. The oldest gospel (Mk.) does not claim to know what the temptation was. Later, Matthew and Luke endeavor to fill in the content. However, both assume as the basis for the three temptations recorded that Jesus was conscious of being the Messiah. From the data already discussed, we can only conclude that this was impossible, and hence the content of

the temptations could not have been known or understood. This conclusion does not disqualify the tradition that there was a temptation at this point, since all three Synoptists agree there was a period of temptation at this juncture, that it occurred in the wilderness, and that it lasted forty days and nights. We are also assured from other considerations that this was true.

The point of greatest uncertainty is the one that seems to be most explicit, namely, the forty days and nights. This expression, as used elsewhere in Scripture from Noah to Ezra,[77] never signifies an exact length of time, but is used to suggest a somewhat extended period. In this instance there is evidence that it rests on a specific limit of time determined by John's arrest, which when written down could not be more exactly determined. This time limit is found in Mark's report that Jesus did not leave the wilderness till after John was arrested (Mk. 1:12-14).

This might have been a month or six months or longer. And there is a further hint that it might well have been some considerable time (Jno. 3:26), and that it may have involved his being in touch with John during that period. The latter's close affinities with the Qumran Sect, whether as a member or leader, and the fact that John's location at the Jordan was still in the wilderness and not more than a ten mile walk from Qumran itself, renders Jesus' stay in the wilderness potentially significant, for it makes it not impossible that he may have visited Qumran and learned of the Sect's organization and aims. It is also not beyond possibility that he contemplated joining the order.

All of these possibilities have opened up because of the discoveries at Qumran. Some of them come close to assured reality when we consider Jesus' later estimate of John, an estimate based on a much more intimate relationship with John than that entailed by the baptism alone.

First, his appraisal of John (Mt. 11:11) is not something asked for by any one, but one spontaneously and enthusias-

tically given. Second, his words cannot be considered as formulated by some one else, for he makes John not only a true prophet but "more than a prophet." And he makes no exception of any biblical character or contemporary person. Thus his estimate in his own words, "Truly, I say to you, among those born of women there has arisen no one greater than John the Baptist," makes him quite clearly the greatest man in the world in Jesus' estimation at a certain time.

These are the words of no mere admirer, close personal friend, or coworker, but of a true disciple pledging his loyalty and devotion to the master leader. Remarkable as are these words, it is still more remarkable that they could get recorded by the followers of Jesus. This, however, could only be done by blunting their force and turning aside their meaning. This is now accomplished by the words that follow: "yet he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he."

Actually, as we shall see, this statement detracts in no way from the estimate of John's stature, for it is evident that these are not the contemporary words of Jesus. First, there was at this point no known concept of the kingdom of God, which could thus demote a loyal and devoted Jew like John the Baptist.

Second, these latter words are in a context that is entirely separated and beyond the days of John the Baptist when Jesus was speaking before John's death. This is explicit in the next verse (Mt. 11:12), "From the days of John the Baptist till now." These words point to a time when the Christian Church was an established institution representing the kingdom of God among men. This was something of which John knew nothing and hence the least in that kingdom could, from the later Christian standpoint, be greater than he.

There are therefore sound reasons for believing that after his baptism Jesus remained in touch with and in the hearing of John the Baptist and possibly also with the

Qumran Sect for whatever period intervened till John was arrested. And it was in this period that he faced his great temptation that might have lost him to the world. It is in this same context where Jesus makes a further interpretation of John which climaxes still more explicitly Jesus' estimate of him and his message (Mt. 11:14, cf. 17.12).

He makes John symbolize Elijah before the great and terrible day of the Lord. What is meant by that day? According to John, it is the time when the messenger of God will come with the winnowing fork of judgment in his hand. At that point, then, it appears that Jesus accepted the doctrine of the speedy end of the world. This was the best that Jewish thought of this period could do about the future of Israel or of the present world, and Jesus shared it still, possibly at a point after he had begun his public teaching.

In what, then, did he find a mission in such setting? It is to be noted that according to Matthew, when Jesus returned to Galilee and began speaking, he used the identical language used by John the Baptist: "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." But even this identity of language and aim marks the beginning of his turning aside from the position of John and the beginning also of overcoming his great temptation. John had remained in the wilderness to prepare there the way of the Lord, as had the Qumran Sect. If men wanted to hear him they would have to come to him. John also remained in the wilderness of nationalism. There is no hint that his thought ever reached beyond the Jewish people.

It was undoubtedly a great temptation to Jesus to remain in that national wilderness with John as long as John continued there, but also even after John was forcibly removed from that geographical setting. Had he done so, we should probably never have heard of him. His even greater temptation, however, was to remain within the wilderness of nationalism in religion, for no other known Jew of his time or before him since the book of Jonah had ever escaped from

that "wilderness."

Further, whether John was a member of the Qumran Sect or even a "prophet of righteousness" of the sect or was thrown out of it or never belonged to it, we know of no member of that sect who ever left the wilderness to proclaim any message. This was only natural for the members had gone into the wilderness according to their own witness [78] to prepare there the way of the Lord.

Jesus, however, left the wilderness, moved by a prophetic urge to return to his people and tell them the truth wherever he found them. At this point he began, perhaps unwittingly, to overcome his great temptation. He acted on the principle that the truth no matter how fearsome or unpalatable was nevertheless "good news" since that truth called for repentance.

Another thing that may have turned him from the wilderness, especially if he had come in contact with the organization and discipline of the Qumran Sect, as well he may, was one prominent injunction of the Sect: "you shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy." This prescription is not found in the Scriptures and goes beyond the Law, but it is found in the "Manual of Discipline" at Qumran.[79] Jesus quotes it in the Sermon on the Mount in order to prescribe the opposite, "But I say to you love your enemies."

There are also other items wherein Jesus differed from John before he repudiated John's message. From the first he preached the gospel of repentance but he did not baptize (Jno. 4:2). John was an ascetic type in dress and food, such as we find at Qumran.[80] Jesus was called gluttonous and a wine bibber because he ate freely with publicans and sinners (Mt. 11:18-19). John and his other disciples, as well as the Pharisees, fasted often, but Jesus' disciples did not fast (Mk. 2:18) or if they did, it was done secretly so that only God knew of it (Mt. 6:16-18).

Thus far we can trace Jesus' relationship to John and his message including Jesus' estimate of John as the greatest

man in the world. We have also seen Jesus' divergences from John in attitude, method, and means used. But all these differences still did not turn him from John's outlook on the future.

We have still to explain what caused Jesus to take a position almost directly opposed to that of John by accepting the prophetic religion. And it would seem that he did this in such a way that he never lost his highest respect for his first teacher.

It has been pointed out that John is the first open advocate of the imminent supernatural end of the world and the Judgment. It is also to be noted that John was likewise an ethical prophet, not probably of the highest order, since apocalyptic ideas would hardly permit a universal ethic, nevertheless, in at least one respect he was at the same time unique as an ethical teacher in his day.

First, his call to repentance was a moral appeal that is not to be discounted by his requirement of baptism. Second, he demanded not merely that men repent, but that they bring forth fruits meet for repentance and not trust in belonging to the chosen race, and that they would be judged by their fruits (Lk. 3:7-9). Third, when men asked him what they should do personally in their various relations and callings he answered them in detail in a way to establish justice and show mercy (Lk. 3:10-14). Fourth, he went out of his way to challenge social iniquity in high places. He thus rebuked Herod for taking his brother Phillip's wife (Mt. 14:1 ff.). For this stand he was arrested and later executed and thus became a martyr to his moral principles. As we should anticipate, there is evidence to show that the death of John came as a tremendous shock to Jesus. We read, "Now when Jesus heard this he withdrew from there in a boat to a lonely place apart" (Mt. 14:13). The context is here interrupted by the miraculous feeding of the five thousand (Mt. 14:14-22), but when this intrusion is removed, the real narrative continues, "he went up into the

hills by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone" (Mt. 14:23). All three Synoptists agree that on this occasion, Jesus withdrew in order to engage in prayer alone (Mt. 14:23; Mk. 6:46; Lk. 9:18).

This incident may well have marked a great turning point in his life, greater even than his baptism by John. A similar turning point has been pointed out in Plato on the death of Socrates. The baptism had introduced him to John the Baptist. John's death as a martyr to moral principle had shown Jesus John's true stature as an ethical prophet, for it completely overshadowed John as an apocalyptist. Where in that age had a well known prophet dared to sacrifice his life for moral principle? We know that for a considerable time before the 1st Century A.D. there was a feeling that the days of the great prophets had come to an end (Mal. 4:5). But here was such a prophet. There was no such prophet known in that age nor had there been since Isaiah II for five hundred years.

It was without doubt the moral stature of John that called forth Jesus' superlatives which he applied to him, and which enabled him to say that no man born of woman was greater than he (Mt. 11:11-14). Furthermore, when he said this we cannot think that he spoke rashly or that he had overlooked the prophets of the past. "The Law and the Prophets" as a designation of Scripture was too well known and used at that time and directly by Jesus himself (Mt. 7:12). Hence he could not have left the prophets out of account in that appraisal of John.

Inevitably, as he called to mind the great spiritual leaders of his people, he was bound to look for a prophet who fearlessly forfeited his life for moral principle. Jeremiah, it is true, had come perilously near to such a fate, but even so it had been advocacy of a political rather than a moral issue that had put his life in jeopardy.[81] Actually none of the known ethical prophets had paid that ultimate price for moral principle.[82] This is echoed in Jesus' thought when he

said of John that he was more than a prophet. In a certain and very real sense John had surpassed them all.

He had therefore by his life, and teachings and death done something to Jesus that no other prophet, no matter how great could ever quite equal. Jesus would accordingly never feel the need of revising down his high estimate of John which Jesus' followers felt bound to minimize (Mt. 11:11).

However, the deeper reason for his estimate turned out to be that John unwittingly did something for Jesus far more important than his dying for moral principle. For when Jesus called John more than a prophet, he had brought into the horizon of his thought all the prophets of the past for comparison with a concrete standard of moral courage and ethical teaching. This was a new and as far as we know, an unheard of procedure in Jesus' day.

The Jews of that time for generations and for centuries earlier had been looking upon prophecy chiefly as prognostication concerning Israel's restoration. They had centered it in a hoped for ruler, the Messiah. John's apocalyptic message of imminent doom and the Judgment put an end to that line of thought for all who hearkened to him.

This direct outcome threw into sharp relief the striking fact in John's case, namely, that in spite of his pessimistic national outlook, he still had a clear ethical message. This makes John unique among apocalyptic advocates thus far. From the author of Daniel onward, they openly gloat over the supernatural destruction of Israel's enemies. This attitude left no room for sound ethical principles. Later, when apocalyptic hopes of Israel's national future faded, pessimism concerning all things human left little or no room for the exercise of ethical thought. Indeed the very opposite of such thought is seen in the days of Jesus, when the highest concept of heavenly bliss for those who achieved it was to be able to witness the torments of their enemies in hell.[83]

Under these circumstances, John's straightforward, ag-

gressive, ethical teaching was not only unique but it is unexplainable by any traditionally known standards of that period. On the other hand, if John had experienced the discipline and known the high ethical teachings of the Qumran Sect, as expressed in their "Manual of Discipline" and other writings, the motivation for his ethical teachings was adequately grounded and entirely understandable.

When, therefore, Jesus turned to compare John with earlier ethical prophets, it required very little search to make it clear that there were no martyrs among them, courageous as they were readily shown to be. But aside from prognostication of a Messiah or of national restoration, both of which John's teaching had definitely disposed of, what straight ethical teaching did they have to offer and how did they compare with John in this respect? At the outset, Jesus may well have felt confident that John would remain unsurpassed. But here for the first time was opened a door leading to the ethical message of the great prophets, a door that could penetrate the nationalistic and supplementary editing of the prophetic writings, a kind of spiritual armor plate that has required at least a hundred and fifty years of modern historical scholarship to pierce.

It was a door that was opened to Jesus because of his discipleship to John, that has never been opened before or since to any one else in the same effective way. John is reported to have had many disciples who continued on for a considerable time after he had passed away. But there is no evidence that any of them ever attempted to appraise John's ethical teaching or who saw anything in it superior or distinct from nationalism. Likewise there is a lack of evidence to show that Jesus had ever tried to explore the Prophets before his contact with John.

He had inherited the nationalistic religion of the Jews. He had been swayed by John's message. He had accepted John's outlook on the future and he may have started preaching essentially John's message. The death of John produced a

profound effect upon Jesus. This is clearly seen in his estimate of John. John's death illuminated his moral stature for Jesus and provided him with the concept of an ethical prophet freed from nationalism, a yardstick with which to measure the prophetic teaching of the past. Never was there a clearer or more rewarding opportunity of its kind nor one that could lead so quickly to assured and far-reaching results.

Where in the prophetic books he started his examination, we have no direct evidence, but the indications we have would be satisfied if he began with the Book of The XII, in English our so called "Minor Prophets." If he did so, he unwittingly began with the earliest and greatest Old Testament prophets. His first recorded reference was Hos. 6:6, and Hosea is the first Book of The XII, although Amos is no doubt the earlier.

Jesus' repeated reference to this passage may well be some indication of its first importance to him. His search, as indicated, was to find the highest ethical teaching of a given prophet. After his superlative estimate of John, made on the ground that there were no martyrs for righteousness' sake among the prophets, it was inevitable that he should now ask, "How do these prophets also measure up with John in respect to moral principles?"

When he attempted this it was of the utmost importance that he should use his yard-stick correctly, otherwise he could do great injustice to the earlier prophets. Would he be able to sift through the material and not miss the ethical high spots in the prophetic writings? If he began with Hosea, he started out to read a highly poetical book in a badly preserved text, unless the text in his day was much superior to ours, which is, from other evidence, to be doubted. The first three chapters have baffled modern scholarship so that there is still lack of any wide agreement as to their meaning.[84] Jesus was not diverted by such difficulties and his selection of Hosea 6:6 shows that he was

able to be completely fair to that prophet if he was seeking for his highest ethical teaching.

This kind of search was like setting out to climb the various peaks of a range of mountains to compare their heights. The elevation was one thing. It could to some extent be estimated beforehand, but what could not be predicted or sometimes even suspected beforehand was the view from the summits.

The view from the ethical heights of Hosea went beyond all human relations and gave a new and revolutionary vision of the character of God. As a Jew of his time Jesus had inherited the concept of monotheism, but applied primarily to the religious nationalism of the Jews. They had therefore officially continued to rely upon the priestly religion of the temple sacrifices and ritual as a definite means of securing and retaining God's favor. But if the words of Hosea were true, then God cannot be appeased by gifts or offerings or ritual observance of any sort. Instead, God calls for steadfast love on man's part.

When Jesus first came upon this Hosea passage, he may well have been non-plussed by it. It was challenging. Could the meaning be taken at its face value? He doubtless read it repeatedly and also went back to see if the verse represented a conclusion or climax of thought or just an independent statement. For here was something in the Scriptures which he had never seen or suspected was there. It was also something that no one else of his generation had understood or even realized was there.

No wonder Jesus said in quoting it, "Go and learn what this means," the meaning ramified so very far. For if ritual and offerings cannot win God's favor, then only conduct could, and that would apply to all men. God would have to be no respecter of persons and his steadfast love would have to be shed abroad toward all men.

Jesus had started out to compare John with the earlier prophets. But when he came upon Hosea, the comparison

shifted to an entirely different plane where henceforth John was no longer a factor. Could all this be true? But one witness was not enough. The question now was did Hosea stand alone in his repudiation of priestly religion?

If Jesus had begun his search with the Book of the Twelve, and so with Hosea, it was only a step to the shorter, simpler, better preserved text of the book of Amos with its sweeping denunciation of sacrificial worship (Am. 5:21-24) and its over-all demand for ethical justice (Am. 5:24). After Amos, only the single chapter of Obadiah intervened between Amos and the Book of Jonah, which was followed immediately by Micah. These all not only confirmed Hosea but they gave him fresh support and extension from different approaches.

Amos set forth God's repeated demands for justice because only ethical justice could save the nation. He showed how sacrifices had blinded the people to justice and hence were an abomination in God's sight. He pointed out that injustice could destroy any nation, Israel being no exception, and hence God could have no favorites. There was therefore no chosen people (Am. 9:7).

The book of Jonah struck a different note. It had nothing to say about sacrifices but there were affinities with John the Baptist. There was the call to repentance in the face of threatened calamity. Evidently the man Jonah was vastly inferior to John. He was really no prophet, properly speaking. He did not want man to repent. Even when he felt obliged to give his warning message, he did it grudgingly, hoping the Ninevites would not heed and so would be destroyed. He even waited to see if this would not take place. But when, instead, they all repented, he declared himself ready to die with bitterness.

Yet if the man Jonah as a prophet was contemptible, the character of God and his concern and compassion for the salvation of the most wicked of men shone through this little book and went far beyond the pre-exilic prophets. God was

indeed a God who called for justice and love in all human relations, and these qualities here make him reach out to all men.

Those who know him are called upon to tell the news to all who know him not, that all may repent and be saved here and now. In Jonah was the proof that the salvation of mankind called for no miracles or magic of any kind to accomplish its purpose. What chance was there that one who had seen such a vision of God and man could be moved by a philosophy of the supernatural end of the world in his generation? The book of Micah summarized both Amos and Hosea and set in sharp antithesis the whole range of lavish offerings, including human sacrifice, over against justice, steadfast love and humility before God, as God's requirement (Mic. 6:6-8).

The comparison with John the Baptist had in it all these possibilities to open the door that led to the very heart of the prophetic religion, the door to the grasp and appreciation of its universal aspects. It could take Jesus far beyond the religion of John the Baptist. Nevertheless, it would always be John who had made all this possible and pointed the way to it. And without him, as far as we can see, this result never would have been a possibility.

John was indeed the forerunner of Jesus in a far higher and truer sense than tradition had ever supposed. By his life and death John could be the unwavering guiding light that beckoned onward and upward to the point where Jesus could see and appreciate the highest religion available in Israel's experience, so that he could make it his very own as a basis for supplying his own particular contribution, which thus took him beyond all the prophets who preceded him.

CHAPTER VII

CLOUDS AND SHADOWS STILL OBSCURING THE SON OF MAN

> And as he said this, a cloud came and overshadowed them . . . and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is my son, my chosen, listen to him" (Lk. 9:34-35).

The preceding chapters have dealt with two indispensable forerunners of Jesus of Nazareth, Isaiah II and John the Baptist. Isaiah II set forth the pattern and framework of a universal religion and some of the means whereby it can be achieved. John the Baptist by his courage and heroic devotion to moral principle provided the essential clue which could make available to Jesus the highest religious teaching in Israel's past. In the foregoing presentation they not only went before him but they clarify the where, when, how and why of his public career and explain the kind of message he brought. That discussion has endeavored to show that Jesus was the first person after Isaiah II fully to accept that prophet's concept of God and man and his ideas on how God and man are to be brought together, namely, by the servant function. It was also shown that Jesus by his life and death set a supreme example of that servant concept.

He was crushed to death by the sins of those responsible for his untimely fate, but his death did not expiate their sins, nor could it have made God any more willing or ready to pardon other men's sins, for as an ethical God, he already

had the highest welfare of all men at heart and hence was ready to forgive those who repented. Yet God as an ethical God could not prevent the death of Jesus nor that of any martyr to truth and righteousness, and yet leave man a free moral agent.

Christian theology, judged by Jesus' reported words, has made a caricature of his death when it has assumed that his violent death accomplished all that is necessary for the salvation of all men, that is by accepting that death as the expiation for all men's sins, so that God may forgive them and in due time take them away to eternal bliss.

Jesus' own prescription has been strangely disregarded. He said, in substance, as reported five times in the gospels (Mt. 10:38-39; 16:24-25; Mk. 8:34-35; Lk. 9:23-24; 14:27), "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. He that would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it." This is not a reference to a single event; it is a prescription for a daily way of life.

It has been held that the gist of the above saying about a cross was first induced later by the early Christians and then ascribed to Jesus, as they tried to formulate what was required to be a true missionary.[85] But it may also be that as the first followers engaged in missionary work and faced its hardships, they recalled a genuine saying of Jesus they were in danger of losing sight of. It may have been called forth by one like the man who declared himself ready to follow Jesus anywhere, without showing any awareness of what it might involve (Lk. 9:57). In that case, Jesus was only aligning his thought with the spirit of Is. 53.

The true servant of God must stand for the highest truth no matter what it costs and it may cost life itself; the servant of God can afford to do this because the higher truth is for the welfare of all men. Yet such unselfish suffering of the servant yields no vicariousness that relieves any one else who follows from standing up for truth wherever it is

challenged with the same devotion, and to the same extent, for that is often the only way that higher truth can come to be among men, the only way the kingdom of God can come on earth.

This then was the pattern of life and of the future of mankind set forth by Isaiah II which Jesus accepted and made his own, and then provided his own teachings that applied it to the personal details of all human relations. We say this was so because the ethical demands of the New Testament attributed to Jesus do fit such a world pattern and can be satisfied by nothing less.

The missing span of the prophetic religion found in Is. 40-55 was unavailable because of conflicting interpretations in later times, which thereby effectively insulated Christianity from the beginning to the present time from the higher prophetic religion of the Old Testament, not only from Is. 40-55 itself, but also from the great prophets of the pre-exilic period. This occurred not merely because of their remoteness but also because there was available no fabric of prophetic thought that could span the gulf of the exile period and hence bring its relevance on into Judaism and to the modern world.

As has been indicated, the evidence is that Jesus alone of the 1st Century A.D. and until modern times was provided, in the providence of God, with the means that made available to him the teaching of all the great prophets before him as the basis used for projecting his own still more closely articulated religion. The detailed argument for this has already been presented and on the validity of that evidence, the aims, purposes and distinctive teachings of Jesus should come out of the flickering shadows and the dimness that has obscured them and him for nearly 2000 years and so become available for the world's understanding and use.

Without this evidence, we venture to say that Christ's followers will never be able to take the next step in religion

in unison. Actually, on no other basis thus far has this been possible. On the ground of the evidence now available, it would seem to be a reasonable expectation that those who profess to follow the Nazarene and who can assess the evidence should be able to find in it "the unity in Christ that we seek," as expressed recently by the leaders of Protestantism. [86]

This may well be an over-optimistic hope. The failure of the Jews in the 6th Century B.C. to rise to the higher concept of God when it was clearly presented to them can only warn us that inherited patterns of thought can for generations and for centuries withstand the claims of reason, based on sound data.

But there is a more serious obstacle involved. When Isaiah II sought to bring Jacob-Israel back to God, that also meant bringing the Jews up to a higher religion than they had ever known. That is basically why the prophet failed in his attempt.

Likewise, the call of Jesus by his life and death as the exponent of a world religion here and now is an appeal to accept a loftier faith in God and man than traditional Christianity at its best has ever professed and to look for a civilization higher than mankind at its best has ever realized or that Christianity has fully dared dream of. First of all, it was a loftier faith because the religion of the great prophets was higher than Judaism out of which Christianity was born and the latter at most aspired to become "the true Israel" (Rom. 11), a concept outmoded by the great prophets (Am. 9:7). Christianity's highest professed aim has been to save individual souls out of a doomed world for a spirit realm to come, by means of a price already paid, whose acceptance will give entrance to a place of bliss that is without moral struggle.

On the other hand, Jesus built upon the prophetic religion and called on all men to reclaim and redeem the earth and, with God's help, transform it into a kingdom of God here

and now. This was to be accomplished by daring to stand for justice and steadfast love even unto death, in all human relations, as man's chief business in life.

No New Testament writer ever sees these demands as part of a whole, much less of a universal whole, nor could any one of them be expected to do so. The only universal pattern available to Christians in that age was the prospect of the world's imminent destruction. The prophetic religion and particularly that of Is. 40-55 was a sealed book to them. Yet with our present knowledge of that prophet we can only ask, can the Jesus of the New Testament measure up to the stature of that great predecessor? The answer is that the unconscious witness of the gospels makes Jesus' framework of thought coincide with that of Isaiah II and as if doubly to assure us, the same evidence makes Jesus go beyond his illustrious predecessor in supplying prescriptions that are essential to make that earlier over-all plan a living reality.

But limited by the outlook of the New Testament writers, no form of Christianity has ever been the bearer of this religion. As a result, what we venture to call the unique spiritual achievement of the human spirit for its preservation by means of the spiritual rejuvenation of mankind has been lost to civilization for nearly 2000 years. That loss has been incalculable. We have alluded to it earlier as a major calamity to civilization. Deprived, then, of this boon throughout the Christian era, what unlosable good has mankind achieved to date? The present menacing threat of man's self-destruction, whether from exploding hydrogen bombs or from exploding populations, is clearly due to man's marvelously acquired skill to control the forces of nature plus an equally astonishing failure to control himself for the common good which must include his own.

Western man has as a result developed a one-sided personality. In spite of constant wars that have more recently reached world proportions, he has succeeded in establishing a limited number of more or less stable democracies.

But these are unable so far to unite or achieve a stable cooperation for their common welfare.

Western man has been able to formulate the first symbol of a world civilization as expressed in the United Nations Organization. In this pursuit, political man has vastly outstripped religiously handicapped man, to the extent that no symbol of world religious unity based on existing religions is yet a possibility. Numerous faiths that claim the capacity to fill this void are as far removed from reality in their thinking as any nation that asumes it can swallow up or displace all other nations on the globe.

Nevertheless, religious man has proved indispensable to civilization. Every nation that has contributed to human progress has had its religious motivation. No nation has ever yet repudiated religion, no matter how strenuously in recent times the ruling oligarchy of certain totalitarian states has exerted itself to this end. Man has never yet been able to live for long by bread alone.

Political man's long lead over religious man in the direction of world cooperation and a common higher purpose yields no assurance of reaping the legitimate fruits of these efforts, quite the contrary. Deprived of an adequate religion to meet the demands of a world civilization, man is admittedly in a more precarious position than at any time in the history of the human race. If such religion is rejected too long, the warning of the prophet Amos may be none too strong: Behold the eyes of the Lord God are upon the sinful kingdom of man and I will destroy it from off the face of the earth.

This religion, so long kept out of use by lesser faiths, is not only the rightful heritage of Christianity but it is also directly adaptable to the most diverse human cultures and ideas, since it is freed from the local peculiarities and limitations of its age and origin. The prophet who first caught the vision of this religion still remains nameless. Yet the lines in which he portrayed it require it to be a

religion of humanity as a whole. This religion has never had a formal name. But he who brought it to its full grown stature, adapted to universal human needs, was Jesus of Nazareth.

However, Jesus did not pose as a religious founder. The Christianity that arose after he had gone from earth was so named on the assumption that he thought he was the coming Messiah (Christos) of the Jews as foretold in prophecy, an assumption that neither Jews nor Christians have since been able to accept as valid. The name has further been claimed as legitimate by changing the meaning of the word Christ (Messiah) to that of Savior of individual souls by means of the efficacy of his death as superior to his teachings. This shift of meaning did make Christianity a new religion, and likewise an essentially non-Semitic religion.[87]

Jesus, however, proclaimed no new religion. On the contrary he set as his ideal the fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets (Mt. 7:12) in terms that enabled him to add his own distinctive contribution to the completion of the highest religion that preceded. The truth of his teachings does not depend on the authority of his name for its validity, but on its intrinsic and inner capacity to make the religion thus formulated adequate to meet the requirements of universal human needs and human relations if all men through it are to be able to realize their own highest well-being. The test of its truth remains to be made. It has never yet been tried as Jesus intended. Nevertheless, herein the authority of the Bible reaches its climax. Herein Protestantism must find its completion in the unity which it seeks and seeks in Christ. Herein lies the one clear path to the unity of purpose and the unity of fellowship of all Christ's followers.

Herein Christianity once freed from the easygoing doctrine of a salvation that costs man nothing, and moved indeed by Jesus' suffering, yet not as accomplishing there-

by man's redemption but as a supreme example of what any man may be called upon to endure as a part of the price of bringing God and man together, could become the bearer of the brightest hope of man—the hope of a future beyond all man's dreams of what lies ahead—an immortal hope on a higher plane that can only come about by daring to lose one's life in the world struggle for freedom, truth and righteousness.

Heavy clouds still obscure the Son of Man, but they are breaking. In the fuller light of Scripture it is now possible to see through them and beyond and to catch a new vision of the Kingdom of Man and the Son of Man in the framework of the Kingdom of God. Moreover, as a result a Voice is speaking to this age with a new and fateful insistence: "This is my Son, my chosen, listen to him."

Bentzen	A. Bentzen, Introduction to the Old Testament
Buber	M. Buber, The Prophetic Faith
Cheyne	T. K. Cheyne, Introduction to the Book of Isaiah
Marti	D. K. Marti, Das Buch Jesaja
Skinner	J. Skinner, Isaiah XL-LXVI (Cambridge Bible)
Whitehouse	O. C. Whitehouse, Isaiah XL-LXVI (The Century Bible)
BAT.	The Bible an American Translation
DSS.	The Dead Sea Scrolls
Ges. Gram.	Gesenius' Hebrew Grammar
JBL.	Journal of Biblical Literature
JNES.	Journal of Near Eastern Studies
RSV.	Revised Standard Version

[1] We can probably never be sure of the name of the author of Isaiah, chapters 40-55. No more can we doubt that he had an identifiable name to his contemporaries or that even the recognition that he had one might be highly important in interpreting some item in his prophecy. Furthermore, there is no intrinsic reason why it could not have been "Isaiah", as there were several Johns in the New Testament, there were two Jonahs and likewise several Isaiahs in the Old Testament (see I Chron. 25:3, 15; 26:25; Ezra 8:7; Neh. 11:7), though in these latter instances the name is slightly camouflaged in English translation as "Jeshaiah". That name might well have been a deciding factor for attaching the prophecy to the already extensive conglomerate called Isaiah.

Of all the anonymous supplements in that compendium, chapters 40-55 alone, not only rise to the ethical level of the prophet Isaiah, but in universal sweep of thought far surpass him. The author is accordingly well worthy of the name "Isaiah" and hence we can, in partial accord with past usage, so designate him but not as Second Isaiah or Deutero-Isaiah as though he were a secondary prophet of that name. Actually, these titles are little more than book reference names for Is. 40-55. We shall therefore think of him as Isaiah II and accordingly so indicate it, thereby leaving ample room for him as an independent and far greater prophet in his own right.

[2] See C. C. Torrey, *Deutero-Isaiah* 1928, Chapter III.

[3] R. H. Pfeiffer, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, 1945, p. 471.

[4] The prophet repeatedly refers to Jacob-Israel as God's servant (41:8,9; 42:1; 43:10; 44:1,2,21; 49:3,6). He also uses the phrase, "my chosen people" (43:20); "my (his) people" (49:13; 51:16,22; 52:9). However, the prevailing servant designation leaves no doubt, in what sense Israel is now chosen and for what purpose.

[5] See W. F. Albright, *From the Stone Age to Christianity*, Second Edition 1957, pp. 257-273.

[6] See T. J. Meek, *Hebrew Beginnings*, Revised Edition 1948, pp. 204-209. The precise contribution of Moses cannot escape a certain measure of uncertainty because of four centuries of oral tradition that lie between him and the earliest written record about him. There need be no such uncertainty concerning the theistic development of Israel as a nation, for it is based on its total religious heritage, including the work of Moses. Starting in polytheism, it will be shown to have gone forward normally and naturally until it reached ethical theism. This latter phase, however, transcended and repudiated nationalism in religion and the chosen people concept, and became the precursor of universal ethical theism after the fall of the nation.

[7] See my *Religion Faces the World Crisis*, pp. 52-103.

[8] See J. P. Hyatt, *Journal of Biblical Literature* vol. LXXV, p. 279 ff.

[9] A Hebrew term used for idol images.

[10] See East India House Inscription of Nebuchadnezzar II.

"O Eternal prince, Lord of all being!
To the king whom thou lovest, and
Whose name thou has proclaimed
As was pleasing to thee,
Do thou lead aright his name,
Guide him in a straight path.
I am the prince, thy favorite,
The creature of thy hand;
Thou hast created me, and
With dominion over all people
Thou hast intrusted me
According to thy favor, O Lord,
Which thou dost bestow on all people.
Cause me to love thy exalted lordship,
And create in my heart
The worship of thy divinity,
And grant whatever is pleasing to thee,
Because thou hast fashioned my life."

C. D. Gray, *Assyrian and Babylonian Literature.*

[11] James B. Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, p. 316.

[12] Pfeiffer, Intro. to O.T., p. 465.

[13] See Jer. 36.

[14] "goes astray", by a slight change instead of "abomination."

[15] "I have called him by his name," elsewhere it is admitted that Cyrus does not know Jehovah (45:4-5), Cf. Marti and Cheayne *ad loc.*, Heb. "He shall call on my name." See also Whitehouse *ad loc.*

[16] Verse 17 is completely disconnected from what precedes and follows. It is clearly a gloss.

[17] 43:3b-7 appears to be a gloss based on a misunderstanding of 45:14. The glossator assumes that bands of foreign prisoners who pass by in chains and bow to acknowledge the God of Israel as the only God are in some unexplained way in Israel's possession and

hence assumes that "I (God) give Egypt as your ransom, Ethiopia and Seba in exchange for you (43:3c). Because you are precious in my eyes and honored, and I love you, I give lands in return for you and peoples in exchange for your life" (v. 4). The glossator has the same viewpoint as the author of Is. 60. He is not concerned with a return from Babylonia. He presupposes rather that there is a center already in Jerusalem and that scattered Jews from the four points of the compass will be brought back to enlarge that community (cf. 56:8b).

43: 5a is made up of phrases from v.v. 1 and 2 "fear not, I am with you." I will bring your offspring from the east and the west. "I will say," "bring my sons from far and my daughters from the end of the earth." Verse 7 is over emphatic and even redundant in calling attention to Israel's exclusive place of honor and glory in God's sight. This also corresponds to the extreme nationalism of Trito-Isaiah.

[18] Is. 44:9-20 "The folly and foolishness of making idols" constitute an interruption of the context. V. 8 connects directly with v. 21. These verses do not contribute to the argument of this context. The prophet has already dealt effectively with idols (40:18-20; 41:6-7) and he will do so summarily later (46:1-2). The section lacks Isaiah II's usual poetic form. It is easiest to explain it as a later insertion, as many have done.

[19] Ch. 44:21a-22a constitute the climax of the section on the servant beginning with 42:1. Israel is the servant of the only God and his transgressions are all forgiven.

V.V. 21b-22b appear to be a later addition, that connects with v.v. 9-20, v. 21b is questionable as it stands, and v. 22b seems to imply Israel's connection with idols in v.v. 9-20, and hence is later.

[20] 44:28b "saying of Jerusalem, She shall be built and of the temple, your foundation shall be laid." The first clause comes too late. If genuine, the city should have been "built" before it was to be "inhabited," cf. v. 26. It appears to be a later annotation by one who wished there to be no doubt that the prophet had prescribed the rebuilding of the city. But if the first clause is later, it carries the second with it. If the temple was important to Isaiah II, and there is no other reference to indicate that it was, nor does this one so indicate, it should have been made central and a part of the climax. But the climax centers in Cyrus in v. 28 and the temple reference is tacked on as an after-thought. Finally the reference to the temple is weak. If the temple was important, it was not enough merely to foretell the laying of its foundation. This becomes understandable, however, as a later addition, when we note that laying the foundation of the temple according to the book of Ezra was all that was accomplished on that structure during the reign of Cyrus and until the reign of Darius, king of Persia, (Ezra 3:10; 4:4, 24).

[21] 45:13c "not for price or reward says the Lord of Hosts," is strange at this point. First, "Thus says the Lord" at the end is redundant cf. v. 11a. Second, the prophet represents Cyrus as receiving

from God great rewards (cf. 45:1-3), in fact the entire Babylonian empire is such a reward. These incongruities may be due to the fact that a later reader who misconstrued the two preceding lines, "He shall build my city and set my captives free", by assuming that the prophet meant two distinct things rather than one, which is all that is required. For if two things were meant, namely, (1) he will build my city and (2) he will then set my exiles free, the items are in the wrong order. Cyrus could not be expected to first build Jerusalem and then set the exiles free. In fact he had already first set them free by his decree. And if he had put this event first we should know he meant the two things. But now the one thing we can be sure of is that he meant to say Cyrus is to be responsible for the rebuilding of Jerusalem by reason of his freeing the exiles. Cf. Ges. Gram. 120 *d, g.*

[22] 45:14a "prisoners", lit. "chattels" used here figuratively of slaves, cf. "Sabeans" in the next line, who with what precedes "come over in chains". This presupposes people. There is no need to alter the text.

V. 14b, "shall come over to you and be yours, they shall follow you." These words appear to be a later insertion since they assume that in some unexplained way the foreign prisoners are in Israel's hands as their possession, whereas the real point of v.v. 14-17 is that the prisoners who are passing by in chains pause to acknowledge Israel's God as the only God.

[23] 48:14 "has brought," Heb. "loves" has the same consonants. The changed order gives the sense suitable here.

[24] 48:16b, the expression, "And now the Lord God has sent me and his spirit" has no manifest connection with this context. It has been widely accepted as a gloss (but cf. Buber p. 221). It is needed to complete 49:5 which is now unfinished and the end is rightly marked by a dash to indicate that it connects badly with v. 6 following. How it got displaced, is not now possible to say. But it is not properly a gloss where it stands. A glossator is supposed to have some evident reason for the position of his gloss, yet this is entirely lacking where the words in question are found.

It has been said that nowhere else does our prophet ever project himself into the text in the first person as here (Marti), but this all depends on the interpretation of 49:5. In any event, the first person at this point fits perfectly. Furthermore, it brings the thought to a fitting climax that prepares for what follows.

Skinner notes that "Spirit" as used here is the prophetic spirit, comparing Is. 61:1. This is precisely what is needed here, if in v. 5 the prophet is speaking in his own name; and it adds another item to the preceding in support of the separation of the speaker from Israel. Spirit also at the end points the way to the correct antecedent for "he" at the beginning of v. 6.

[25] 48:22 is entirely out of context here and is a gloss borrowed from 57:21 where it is in order. The only variation is in the name for God.

[26] For the same construction, see Is. 54:9: "For this is (as) the waters of Noah to me" (Masoretic text). The variant reading of the versions: "This is like the days of Noah to me" and accepted by RSV., by supplying "For" at the beginning, is less suitable. The situation was not like the days of Noah for there all God did was to promise not to be angry and destroy any more, but in the prophet's time, God goes far beyond not being angry. "The waters of Noah," however, symbolize God's temporary wrath which he forever renounced, and hence the double assurance of his present attitude to the prophet. For other examples of this construction, see S. of S. 1:15; Job 29:15; Ges. Gram. 141d. For this view of the prophet as "the servant" here, cf. Bentzen, p. 112; Buber, pp. 223, 230.

[27] See Torrey Deutero-Isaiah 1928, p. 245.

[28] 49:23a has an attitude toward the Gentiles that is entirely contrary to Isaiah II in its nationalistic harshness, cf. Is. 45:22; 49:6 with Trito Isaiah, Is. 60:10-11; 61:5. These lines appear to be a later gloss enlarging upon v. 22b, cf. 48:22 note.

[29] The term "servant songs" has validity as applied usually to the four passages 42:1-4; 49:1-6; 50:4-9; 52:13-53:12, in that they all deal with the servant figure but so does the rest of the prophecy and none of it ever loses sight of that figure and his importance. That these passages are distinct from their contexts, whether written by a different hand or by the same writer on a different occasion has not gotten beyond scholarly controversy. That these four passages stand out as separate compositions in the prophecy can only be established by their content and this cannot be said to have been accomplished. That the writer conceived them as separate songs does not appear in their outward form. Furthermore the prophecy is made up of much highly lyrical poetry, and repeatedly the author calls upon his audience to join in singing special songs (42:10-13; 44:23; 49:13; 52:9). On 42:1-4, cf. Harvard Theol. Review XXX, p. 249 ff.

The appropriateness of calling the four passages mentioned servant songs is limited by the fact that in only one does the servant surely speak. In one the term servant does not appear and in two the servant is only described. As here treated, all passages form a firmly knit and structural part of the author's thesis.

[30] That 50:10-11 are a later addition rests upon questionable interpretation of the preceding, cf. Whitehouse *ad loc.*, V. 10 marks a definite turning point both in the prophet's audience and in his own strategy. Hitherto he had not hesitated to chide, rebuke and even denounce his fellow exiles for their dullness, stupidity and slowness to grasp the truth.

For the first time he now offers kindly advice and counsel to certain faithful believers. He will do this twice more in quick succession (51:1,7), and he will never again rebuke his hearers. He had recently suffered an attack on his integrity as a prophet (50:8) and had also reported physical violence suffered and shameful treatment (50:6). It may have been his steadfastness under such circumstances that

won him his first sympathetic listeners, and it was only natural that he should capitalize on this small gain in his favor by encouragng those who approved. These phenomena, with little doubt, also marked a violent turning against the prophet by others, and these were quite certainly none other than fellow Jews. Certain of those Jews who had been doing quite well economically in Babylonia before the advent of Cyrus, after a minimum of violence in his taking over and his subsequent beneficent reign may have strongly felt that this, for them their native land, was by all odds the best place in all the world to live, and they may well have vigorously resented a peripatetic poet-prophet who kept going about trying to induce their fellow kinsmen and friends to leave rich Babylonia and emigrate to a remote province of Palestine, there to try to rehabilitate a poor land and raise up its ancient ruins purely because of religious sentiments. Those who thus opposed the prophet were not apt to be loyal worshipers of Jehovah, but adherents of other gods. V. 11 could fittingly apply to them.

[31] 51:9-11 are irrelevant here. V.V. 9-10 assume that God has not yet acted and that his action is long overdue. The outlook is that of the later Isaiah 64:1 ff. The fact is overlooked that God has already acted through Cyrus to permit the Jews' return home, so that it is now emphatically the time for the Jews to act. The motivation for these verses is to be found in the word "deliverance" in 51:5,8 but misconceived from the later nationalistic viewpoint of deliverance of Israel only. Actually in both instances "my deliverance" applies to other peoples as well as Israel e.g., "my justice for a light to the peoples" (v. 4), God's will shall prevail, ("my arms will rule the peoples"), but not to subdue or crush them but for their salvation, since the distant "coastlands wait for me and for my arm they hope" (v. 5), and my deliverance shall be forever.

V. 11 repeats almost exactly 35:10. It furnishes the natural climax to 35:1-9, but any climactic effect after 51:10 is not only lacking but so is any thought connection. Since there was no assurance of God's action there could be no ground for a return that depended on such action. Furthermore 51:12ff. connect directly with 51:8 and show no awareness of what now comes between. V. 11 may very well be a marginal gloss taken from 35:10 in elaboration of the word "redeemed" in 51:10, so Skinner.

[32] The authenticity of 51:12-16 has been questioned, e.g., part of v. 15 appears in Jer. 31:35. Its removal would not disrupt the thought here and it may have been added later. Nevertheless these verses carry forward the conforting assurance begun in v. 7 to faithful but fearful adherents whom the prophet trys to encourage.

It is to be noted that the strong element of fear that first appears in this context closely follows the report of the prophet's persecution, and the evidence that he had gained sympathetic listeners, perhaps as a result of his steadfastness. The new fear motivation can hardly be due to anything in the outward Babylonian situation, but it fits in perfectly with the hardening of the Jews' attitude against the pro-

phet and his thesis (see note 30) which led to his persecution, since his faithful followers would have to face the same kind of opposition and it could well become terrifying (cf. v.v. 13-14).

[33] 52:3-6 is a later intrusion. (1) It is in prose. (2) It assumes that Israel in its past sufferings was innocent contrary to Isaiah II and the earlier prophets.

[34] See H. H. Rowley, *The Servant of the Lord,* 1952, p. 50 f.

[35] It has been held by many interpreters that Jeremiah at least served as a model for the tragic figure described in this chapter. Cf. 53:7 and Jer. 11:19, and see Jer. Ch. 40-44, also J. Philip Hyatt, *Jeremiah,* 1958.

[36] 53:1 "How few". The question "who etc.," cf. Sheldon Blank, *Prophetic Faith* 1958, p. 100 ff., who leaves it open whether any believed, but the context shows that at least the present speakers did.

[37] "Servant of God", implied as the manifestation of the arm or power of the Lord.

[38] 53:2 "earlier" by the change of one letter cf. 48:7; preferable since "before him" lacks any suitable antecedent of "him".

[39] 53:4a "has borne", the present perfect tense here is inaccurate and misleading. It can only be a simple past (aorist) as in all the other verbs in 1-10a (cf. BAT.) "pains caused by us", i.e., "our pains" of the text are not what we suffered but what we visited on the servant by our treatment of him, (cf. v. 6f.) using "our" as a subjective genitive, see Ges. Gram. 128 g. and JBL. LVI p. 38.

[40] Similarly with "our sorrows", following.

[41] 53:4b "we as a people", the speakers while admitting that the servant was of a preceding generation (v. 8), thus identify themselves with the nation in sharing the blame.

[42] 53:5a "wounded by", not "for." The preposition originally signifies simply separation, hence "from" in the sense of source, origin, means, agency, never "for the sake of." Here the agency is explicit, "we caused it." The same applies to "bruised by" not "for." See Ges. Gram. 119 v-y. Our earliest version (LXX) has properly *dia,* "through," "by." Moffatt reads: "Twas our misdeeds that crushed him."

[43] 53:5b "chastisement that could have been for our peace," Lit. "chastisement of our peace" and "with his stripes there was healing for us," these are not statements of fact, since the next verse shows, the servant was regarded as a criminal and every one went his own way to ruin and as a result no one had peace or healing.

[44] 53:8b "stricken by" not "for," LXX has *apo,* from, by, cf. note 43.

The transgression of "my people" is a rather precise phrase and far-reaching in its bearing. By differentiating between the departed servant and "my people," the latter term cannot refer to foreign nations. For if they were speaking, the term to be expected would be "our peoples." The only people necessarily presupposed in this chapter is Israel and the speakers here identify themselves as Jehovah

worshipers. Hence "my people" can logically refer only to Israel and the servant can only be an historical individual. The correction of "transgression of my people" to read "our transgressions" is unwarranted, (1) it opens the door to a different theory which could not tolerate the text as it stands. (2) The antecedent of "who" after "generation" in this verse is "any person" of his generation understood, and the phrasing such person would naturally use would not be "our transgressions," but very properly what we have: "the transgression of my people." (3) Dead Sea Scrolls read "his people" which is equally precise and definite and leaves no ground for altering the text. The servant is clear as an individual of a previous generation, none of whose contemporaries recognized that he was done to death by the transgressions of his own people.

[45] 53:9 "godless" in place of Heb. "rich," which gives a suitable parallelism, and rests on a changed order of letters in the Hebrew word. Or read, "even with the wicked."

[46] Every objection raised by the prophet's audience brought it home to him how far he was from his main goal. These objections are now registered and successively answered in 40:6-8, 27-31; 41:14-16; 42:14-16; 43:26-28; 45:9-13; 46:11-13; 49:14-18, 19-23, 24-26; 50:1-3, 4-9; 51:7-16, 17-23; 53:1-10a.

[47] 53:10b "you make", Heb. singular "thou", LXX has plural "you"; LXX and DSS. add "light" (v. 11), "from the travail of his soul he shall see light."

[48] See JBL. LVI p. 34.

[49] It has been said that when Is. 34 and 35 are once considered in their present position, it is evident that they were originally intended to stand in this relationship and hence can never be dissociated (See C. C. Torrey, Deutero-Isaiah p. 279).

It is true that these two chapters offset each other to perfection. The blood-thirsty, desolating barbarity of the one, and the gentle, singing loveliness of the other, transforming the wilderness into a beautiful, blooming landscape, beneath an overarching eternal good purpose for man.

However, two things may be declared certain: (1) No one person ever wrote both. Hence their present "inevitable" relation is editorial not structural. It is this that explains the present position of chapter 35. (2) Ch. 35 was not written as an antithesis to Ch. 34. The present antithesis is manifest in the totally different spirit found in the two. It is no new claim that Is. 35 belongs to Is. 40-55. In 1925 it was pointed out that eighty-seven percent of the words in Is. 35 are found in Is. 40-55. HUCA. p. 53, note. In 1931 this chapter was proposed as the original introduction to Is. 40-55, see A. T. Olmstead, *History* of *Palestine-Syria* p. 348. Ch. 35 is not a complete entity in itself but part of a larger setting. As the chapter stands, it is not evident from whence the return starts, nor why the desert is involved nor for what constructive purpose the ransomed are to return. However, when the chapter is placed after Ch. 55 all of these queries are answered. For,

in content our chapter deals with the same return route found in Is. 40-55. Both begin with the wilderness and end at Zion. In 40-55, special features and portions of the route are emphasized. In 35 all these features appear on the route as a whole. The transformation of the desert, the breaking forth in the desert of rivers and springs, the presence of choice trees and flowers, the carefully built highway, the note of joy and singing, the encouragement against fear, the special manifestation of God, the assurance to the blind and deaf, are all found in both, and 35 climaxes with what is now Is. 51:11. See note 31.

[50] Against the genuineness of chapter 35 as a part of this prophecy, it may be urged that it goes no further than the return to Zion, making that a glorious end in itself, and this was not Isaiah II's aim. This objection overlooks the basic strategy of the prophecy. In order to arouse the exiles to think of a future for themselves as Jews, the one thing that could be expected to stir them to action was the thought of a restored community in Jerusalem, a thing made possible by Cyrus.

The attempt to make Is. 35 late (Marti, p. 246; Duhm *et al*) places the desert in Palestine and thus removes that desert as a serious obstacle to any return whatever, and still leaves the starting point of the Return unaccounted for. See 41:17-19; 42:15-16; 43:2, 14-21; 44:26-28; 48:20-21; 51:10-11; 52:11-12; 55:12-13.

[51] Cf. Jonah 3:3 and A. T. Olmstead, *History of Babylonia* 1930, pp. 636-638.

[52] See Bernhard Duhm, *Das Buch Jesaja* 1892.

[53] See Marti, pp. 361 f.; Skinner, p. 163.

[54] See 56:6-8; 57:13-14; 58:13-14; 59:17-20; 60:11-14; 61:5-6; 62:8-9; 63:6,8,17-18; 64:1-2, 8-11; 65:9-10, 19; 66:14-16.

[55] See Millar Burrows, *The Dead Sea Scrolls* 1955, and *More Light from the Dead Sea Scrolls* 1958.

[56] In Lk. 24:34 the appearance to Peter may well indicate the earliest basis for the Resurrection Doctrine. See M. S. Enslin, Christian Beginnings 1920, pp. 170-171.

[57] See my *The Historical Jesus*, pp. 49-52.

[58] Approximately a year and three months. See A. T. Olmstead, *The Jesus of History* 1930, pp. 279-281.

[59] Cf. I Cor. 11:23-26 with Lk. 22:14-20 RSV. and margin.

[60] The most common basis traditionally for Christian baptism, as commanded by Christ is found in one of the three later appendixes attached to Mark's gospel (16:15). See RSV. and Moffatt's N.T. The second source is Mt. 28:19 where baptism is commanded in the name of the Trinitarian formula which did not become an official church doctrine till the 4th Century A.D. The earliest formula known was in the name of Christ, but without any indication of a command by Jesus. (See Acts 2:38).

[61] See my *Religion of Jesus*, Chapter 4 notes 3 and 4.

[62] See RSV. margin on Mt. 24:36.

[63] See JNES. XIV pp. 100-109.
[64] See T. H. Gaster, *The Dead Sea Scriptures*, 1956, p. 12.
[65] See Millar Burrows, *The Dead Sea Scrolls*, 1955, p. 238.
[66] See Gaster, *op. cit.*, p. 5; Frank M. Cross, *The Ancient Library of Qumran*, 1957, p. 112.
[67] See Burrows, *op. cit.*, p. 331.
[68] See Gaster, *op. cit.*, p. 333.
[69] See Burrows, *More Light on the Dead Sea Scrolls*, 1958, p. 331.
[70] See Cross, *op. cit.*, pp. 95-117, note 95.
[71] *Ibid.*, pp. 147-149.
[72] See Manual of Discipline, Gaster, *op. cit.*, p. 58.
[73] See Cross, *op. cit.*, p. 150, note 7.
[74] *Ibid.*, p. 69; Burrows, DSS. pp. 404-405.
[75] See Burrows, DSS. p. 329.
[76] See R. E. Murphy, *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Bible*, 1956, p. 65.
[77] See Gen. 7:4; Ex. 24:18; I Ki. 19:8; II *Esdras* 14:41-45.
[78] See Gaster, *op. cit.*, p. 56.
[79] Ibid., p. 60.
[80] Ibid., p. 80.
[81] See Jer. Ch. 26.
[82] Mt. 23:29-35 is a general reference and gives no prophet's name.
[83] See *Assumption of Moses.*
[84] See JNES. XIV pp. 100 ff.
[85] See Enslin, *op. cit.*, p. 397.
[86] See Report of the General Secretaries to the Fourth General Assembly of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. 1957, p. 2.
[87] See *Religion of Jesus*, p.p. 161-180.

EXCURSUS

For a list of those who would end Second Isaiah or Isaiah II with chapter 48, see R. H. Pfeiffer O.T. Intro. p. 453 f. The reasons assigned for separating chapters 49-54 from what precedes and attaching them to what follows are twofold. First, in relation to what precedes, suspicion is claimed because nothing further is said of Cyrus in these chapters and there is no more mention of Babylonia or the Chaldeans. These observations have weight only in case there is good evidence to show that the writer's audience and purpose are different from those found in the preceding context.

Secondly, as to connection with what follows, Zion's restored glory is foretold and a part of this glorification in both is to be brought about by the return of dispersed Jews from remote and far distant regions. Twice this is expressed in identical language (49:18 and cf. v 22 and 60:4 and again in 51:5 and 60:9). This argument can only have weight if the purpose to be served by the return and the restored glory of Zion is the same in both sets of references.

A proper appraisal of the above argument calls for a summary of the sharply divergent ideas and ideals that distinguish Second Isaiah from what follows. In the former, universalism dominates the thought throughout. Israel as God's servant is to be restored not as a political state but as a religious entity, whose chief function is to bring a knowledge of the one and the only true and ethical God of all the world, to all the nations of mankind for their salvation in a kingdom of God on earth. No temple is mentioned and there is no reference to ritualistic worship.

According to what follows (Trito-Isaiah) the strictest nationalism is everywhere regnant. The restoration of a glorified Israel to its land is to be an end in itself. The wealth of the nations will be brought to Israel. Foreigners and their kings shall build your walls and minister to you (60:10) and the kingdom that will not serve you shall perish. All such nations shall be utterly destroyed (60:12). Vengeance is in God's heart to tread down the peoples in his anger and pour out their life blood on the earth (63:4-6). With such strongly differentiated ideas how could any chapter or group of chapters fail of unanimous assignment? We know that probably the strongest encouragement that could give Jews anywhere a renewal of hope after 586 B.C. was the assurance of a restored nation symbolized by a glorified Jerusalem. This was particularly essential to Second Isaiah if he was to stimulate the exiles in Babylonia to return to Palestine.

In chapter 60 the purpose of bringing back dispersed Jews is the

restoration and glorification of Israel alone and at the expense of all other nations. In chapter 49, on the other hand, occurs the clearest statement to be found, beginning with chapter 40, that Israel's restoration is not to form a political state but in order to provide a people in the service of mankind (v. 6).

A similarly identical expression occurs in 51:5 and 60:9. "The coastlands wait for me." In the latter the purpose for waiting is that they may bring back Jews of the dispersion and also to bring their own wealth for the glorification of the Jews, "bringing to you the wealth of the nations with their kings led in procession (v. 11). In the former my deliverance draws near speedily, my salvation has gone forth and my arms will rule the peoples", nevertheless "the coastlands wait for me and in my arms they hope" (51:5), my justice will go forth for a light to the peoples (v. 4). There is no vengeance involved (cf. 59:17-18), humiliation or servitude (cf. 60:12). The identities of expression occasion no difficulty, since the later writer of chapters 60 ff. had before him chapter 49ff. and was free to make use of such concepts as he chose in order to give them his own nationalistic interpretation.

There are, however, concepts and attitudes running through chapters 40-55 that are not found in chapters 56-66. Throughout the former there is a pervading viewpoint that the prophet's audience consists of Jewish exiles, who require extensive persuading if they are to be moved to return home as a first step to be taken by them and also as fundamental to Israel's future, but with no indication throughout that any of them have been persuaded to take that step.

In the remaining chapters the viewpoint is presupposed throughout that a Jewish community is functioning in Jerusalem, that the temple exists and that the religious life of the community centers in the ritualistic worship of the temple.

It appears to be this community that is always addressed or had in mind. Jews of the dispersion are mentioned in only two contexts (ch. 60 and 66:20). They are never directly addressed. Their future return will be a matter of quiet gratification. "Your heart shall thrill and rejoice" (60:5) but their coming is to play no significant role beyond increasing the loyal population. "Thus says the Lord who gathers the outcasts of Israel, I will gather yet others to him besides his gathered ones" (56:8).

In 40-55 the exiles are not only direct listeners to oral presentation but active participants who offer a series of objections that run through these chapters and the prophet feels obliged to try to answer them in detail in order to defend his own main thesis.

Professor Julian Morgenstern's comprehensive and detailed analysis, reconstruction and re-evalulation of Deutero-Isaiah, expressed in *The Message of Deutero-Isaiah in its Sequential Unfoldment* (Hebrew Union College Annual, Vol. XXIX, pp. 1-67), reached me too late for specific reference here beyond what is already contained in this excursus concerning the problem as a whole.

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